

GOLF 50

Home and away day beats fixture congestion

THE TIMES

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Friend and foe under bombardment

Furore over outburst by right-winger

By JAMES LANDALE, ANDREW PIERCE, ARTHUR LEATHLEY AND PHILIP WEBSTER

THE Conservative Party was embarrassed last night when one of its MPs was heard heaping personal abuse on Virginia Bottomley and his Labour opponent as part of an attack on the "dreadful" women in politics.

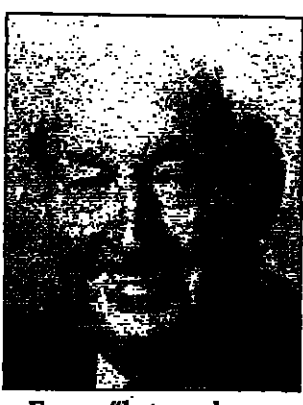
David Evans, the colourful rightwing MP for Welwyn Hatfield, described the Heritage Secretary as "dead from the neck upwards" and said that she was in the Cabinet purely because she was a woman. He went on to deride Melanie Johnson, the Labour candidate in his constituency, saying that she lived with her boyfriend and "three bastard children" and had never done a proper job.

Then for good measure, he said that he did not like John Major, who was "vindictive and not forgiving".

Most of the women at Westminster were "ordinary" and were promoted simply because it looked "politically good", Mr Evans said. That meant some "dreadful" women were in positions of authority.

Mr Evans, who is a member of the Conservative 1922 Committee, executive, made the remarks to sixth-formers during a current affairs lesson at Stanborough College, Welwyn Garden City, last Thursday. He gave permission for his answers to be tape-recorded, and a cassette found its way to Anglia Television, who broadcast it last night.

Mr Evans complained later that he had been betrayed over what had been a "light-hearted interview", but he was



Evans: "betrayed over light-hearted interview"

hope that the story would run out of steam. Both issued a curt "no comment".

Mr Evans said in his interview: "So then women get promoted, like Virginia Bottomley, who's dead from the neck upwards, right? I mean, she has been in the Cabinet simply because she is a woman." But he praised Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, as a "different kettle of fish" who would have "made it in any forum".

He also called for the return of capital punishment, suggested that rapists should be castrated, questioned the innocence of the Bridgewater Three and the Birmingham Six, and referred to "some black bastard" raping a girl outside her school.

Of Ms Johnson he said: "She is single, lives with her boyfriend, three bastard children, lives in Cambridge, never done a proper job."

Miss Johnson, 42, was selected from a women-only shortlist before the practice was banned, but she has been an Ofsted inspector for four years after being an NHS manager and is also a magistrate. She and her partner of 18 years have three children, twin daughters aged 12 and a son of ten.

Ms Johnson, who has a good chance of wiping out Mr Evans's 8,000 majority in May, said last night: "I am used to the hurly burly of politics but David Evans has descended to the gutter. I am standing for election not my

nevertheless unrepentant when challenged by reporters. He said: "I don't care what people make of it. I often speak to school children and their teacher, but I see the comments as private. I don't expect them to go blurring everything out to you lot."

"I make no apologies because I have nothing to apologise for. The point is that if you have children out of wedlock, they are bastards and there's no getting away from that." He said later, however, that he had made an apology to Mrs Bottomley and claimed she had accepted it.

But Tory strategists voiced dismay, saying that such a controversy was the last thing they needed. "Nothing David Evans has ever said has merited front-page news until now. It could not be worse," one campaigner said.

Central Office held urgent talks with Downing Street and they agreed to create an official wall of silence in the



Melanie Johnson: "I am horrified that David Evans could stoop so low"

It's May Day: Major all but confirms election date

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

THE Prime Minister paved the way for a six-week general election campaign yesterday when he all but confirmed that it would take place on May 1.

John Major told a BBC phone-in programme that it was a "fair expectation" that the election would be that day, and senior Conservative sources later said that there was no longer any doubt about the timing.

By the time Mr Major addresses the Conservative Central Council in Bath on Saturday night, it will be too late to announce the only other realistic option for polling day - April 10. But Mr Major still intends to keep the political world guessing over when he will formally announce the dissolution of Parliament.

Yesterday, as the arrival in Westminster of the Wirral by-election victor Ben Chapman pushed the Government into a minority, Tony Blair urged Mr Major to call the election now.

Tory chiefs debating the timing have earmarked five possible dates for the announcement. Some close colleagues want Mr Major to avoid naming the day until after the central council weekend - and even to wait until Easter. They argue that if Mr Major's central council speech were treated as part of the formal campaign, Mr Blair and Paddy Ashdown would also receive lengthy coverage in the day's news bulletins. As soon as an election is announced, broadcasters have a duty to give the parties equal treatment.

Other ministers are arguing that because the election date will be known by the end of next week, Mr Major might as well get the announcement out of the way and use the Bath

speech to set the ball rolling. But a senior Tory strategist said: "The Prime Minister believes that the longer he has to get at Labour the better. This is the way he will do it."

Whatever happens, it is accepted that the Bath gathering will mark the launching of the campaign. The party leaders would not start their travelling roadshows until the dissolution, but all the other electioneering activities would be under way.

During his appearance on a Radio 5 Live phone-in, Mr Major attributed Labour's

Labour ditches free eye test plan

Labour has dropped its commitment to restore free eye-sight tests and dental check-ups, it emerged last night.

Party aides said the changes would be reviewed after the general election but denied that Labour had any intention of abolishing them. Page 2

strong lead in the polls to the Tories long period in power. He said: "The greatest difficulty we have at the moment is not with the state of the country, which is patently growing - you can see that with the growth figures in the economy and with the dramatic fall in unemployment."

"All of that is very welcome. But when you have been in government for 18 years you are fighting in a sense a phantom enemy, and I think that is a bigger problem for us than any other."

Matthew Parris, page 2
Peter Barnard, page 9
Leading article, page 19

Lego galore in West Country

Youngsters were flocking to beaches in south Devon and Cornwall yesterday as thousands of Lego bricks were washed up.

The bricks had been part of a consignment on its way from Lego headquarters in Denmark to America. The ship carrying them was damaged in storms last month.

Dunblane parents find self-support

As the first anniversary of the Dunblane shootings approaches, the parents of the 16 children who died say they have learnt to cope with their grief through meeting every week to laugh and cry together. One said: "A lot of people say that the Thursday meetings are the highlight of their week."

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Troops and police gain upper hand in Albania

By MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

TROOPS and police appeared to be winning the battle to impose order in much of Albania yesterday, though armed gangs were still roaming the south. Trifun Shehu, the Foreign Minister, said the risk of civil war had hugely diminished.

Army bases in Vlore and Himara were looted, however, as rebels continued to rampage through the main towns. A four-year-old was killed by a stray bullet.

President Berisha yesterday sacked General Shteme Kosova, his chief of staff, accusing him of failing to defend the army barracks. He was replaced him with General Adem Copani, a presidential military adviser. The authorities said more than 1,500 weapons had been looted by rioters over the weekend.

The Foreign Ministry yesterday lifted the blanket ban on reporting from Albania, telling the European Broadcasting Union that it could resume satellite transmission of foreign television reports. The restrictions on the domestic press remained in force.

Javier Solana, Nato's Secretary-General, yesterday ruled out military intervention in Albania.

New army chief, page 14

Football stars sentenced to await retrial decision

By LIN JENKINS AND ADRIAN LEE

THREE footballers accused of match fixing were facing an agonising wait last night to see whether they must face a fresh trial after a jury failed to reach a verdict.

Bruce Grobbelaar and Hans Segers were said by their lawyers to be extremely disappointed after the jury remained deadlocked despite almost 11 hours of deliberation. With John Fashanu they walked from Winchester Crown Court, dazed after hours of waiting.

The jury of eight men and three women said at the end of the seven-week trial that they could not reach majority decisions on any of the charges against any defendant.

Amid uproar in the court, the judge, Mr Justice Tuckey, was told that the case which, with its surrounding investigations, is estimated to have cost £10 million so far, was likely to be retried as soon as possible.

In the dock the former Liverpool and Southampton goalkeeper Mr Grobbelaar, the Dutch-born former Wimbledon player Mr Segers, Mr Fashanu, who is better known as a television presenter nowadays, and their alleged go-between, Heng Suan Lim, glanced at each other with obvious despondency.

The four men looked up to the public gallery where their families were sitting as David Calvert Smith for the prosecution

immediately announced: "It is the Crown's current intention to seek a retrial."

He will now discuss with the Attorney-General a new date and possibly a new venue which the Crown Prosecution Service said last night should be announced within a week, if there is to be a new trial.

The judge brought a smile from the defendants as he conceded that normal procedure dictates that he might have to "substitute" himself from any new hearing. He asked that things should start moving as soon as possible because the events behind the case had happened in November 1994.

As the four accused walked from the dock facing what their families and solicitors said was "months more worry", Mr Grobbelaar did



manage a joke. He turned to a policeman: "Perhaps we should have decided this on penalties, but the trouble is we would have two goalkeepers."

His mother Beryl was less jovial. "I am devastated, naturally. It is disgraceful that they could not reach a verdict."

The end came after the jury sent a note to the judge at 3.43pm saying they could not agree. They filed back into court after ten hours and 59 minutes of deliberation and were asked by the judge whether, if they were given more time, there was any reasonable chance of their reaching majority verdicts on any of the defendants.

The foreman replied: "We don't believe so, my Lord." Asked if they had had enough time, the foreman replied: "Yes, my Lord." The judge said: "I think that's it" and discharged them with his thanks.

Legal sources said last night that the trial had cost £1.5 million, but that the investigation had cost more than £10 million. A separate inquiry by the Football Association into the players' behaviour will have to wait until the outcome of any future trial.

In the meantime, Mr Segers and Mr Grobbelaar will continue to play for their clubs, Woking and Plymouth Argyle. Continued on page 2, col 6

Rob Hughes, page 48

Woman stabbed in head on train

By JOANNA BALE
AND RICHARD DUCE

A WOMAN was in a critical condition in hospital last night after being stabbed in the head on a train in an apparently motiveless attack.

Alison Kennedy, 27, was stabbed with a commando knife as she sat alone in a carriage on the 8.46pm Waterloo to Guildford service as it approached Clondrie in Surrey on Monday night. The six-inch blade penetrated her skull behind an eye, piercing her brain.

After hearing her screams, a passenger in another carriage found Ms Kennedy still conscious with the knife embedded in her head.

Ms Kennedy, who had been travelling from her home in Belfast to visit her sister in Guildford, remained conscious as she was taken to the Royal Surrey Hospital at Guildford. She was later transferred to the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery in London where she underwent emergency brain surgery.

Members of her family were at her bedside yesterday. Her condition was said to be "critical but stable".

A youth aged 17, of no fixed address, was last night charged with attempted murder.

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Relaxed leading man awaits final curtain

SOMETHING had changed in John Major's manner at Prime Minister's Questions yesterday. He was not dejected, as he had seemed last Thursday before the votes at Wirral South were counted. But neither was he geed up and punching his way out of a corner, as he can surprise us by doing.

He was simply relaxed. Almost aimless, at times. The Prime Minister rambled his way through a series of unlightening answers to low-grade questions, more than once losing his grammatical thread. He was going through the motions.

Though it must have been one of the last Question Times for this Parliament and Government, the session was

curiously lacking in tension. Only on the first question did hackles rise. It came from Nicholas Budgen (C), the man who succeeded Enoch Powell as MP for Wolverhampton SW. Mr Budgen declared that "strict control of immigration" was the key to good race relations and that Labour planned to relax this control. He invited Mr Major to comment.

Briefly, the mood turned ugly. A group of Labour backbenchers shouted with real fury at Budgen: "Desperate! Disgraceful!" When the Prime Minister rose there was a sudden and total hush. What would he say?

Major, speaking steadily and calmly, said he was not going to lend his voice to



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

anything that imperilled improving race relations. There was a moment of silence as he sat down.

The tone was fastidious, decent and proper, though it was not immediately clear to me that Mr Major's answer was intended to slap Nicholas Budgen down. But it may well have been and that is how MPs took it. Rising next, Tony Blair remarked, generously: "I think the Prime Minister deserves credit for that answer."

The remaining questions and answers failed to match the stature of this short inter-

lude. The Labour leader repeated his litany about "20,000 fewer nurses, 50,000 more managers" in the NHS. In a faintly weary riposte, the PM complained that "for the last five years we have had nothing but opposition from the ... then reflected (perhaps) that ... nothing but opposition from the Opposition" would invite the response "Well they would, wouldn't they?"

"Nothing but opposition from the ... Labour Party," he continued. Phew! Blair tried to goad Major

into commenting on his Health Secretary's recent excursion into the single currency debate, but Major was not goaded.

Stephen Dorrell had been "an outstanding Health Secretary", he said limply, failing to summon enough enthusiasm for Dorrell seriously to dent the latter's hopes of becoming party leader.

Labour's David Winnick (Walsall N) — one of those grat-like political irritants who frontbenches keep swatting but never quite squash — bit Mr Major on the ear with a question about the funding of the Tory party. Major, looking bored, directed his answer to the funding of Mr Blair's office.

Eric Illsley (Barnsley Central) quoted to the Prime Minister the opinion of Lord Tebbit on the Deputy Prime Minister, sitting beside him. Michael Heseltine was "tame, less, tacky ... and self-centred". Mr Heseltine looked back on his bench looking rather flattered.

Earlier, I had watched the Environment Secretary, the civilised John Gummer, answering what was almost certainly the final session of Environment Questions before the election. For you and me, it was simply another Tuesday, another Environment Questions.

For Mr Gummer, 57, the bitter-sweet sensation of standing, perhaps for the last time in his career, at a government dispatch box.

Labour abandons pledge to restore free eyesight tests

BY JILL SHERMAN AND JEREMY LAURANCE

LABOUR has dropped its commitment to restore free eyesight tests and dental check-ups, it emerged last night.

Party aides said the charges would be reviewed after the general election but denied that Labour had any intention of abolishing them. "We have no plans whatsoever to restore free eyesight tests and dental checks," said a spokesman for Chris Smith, the Shadow Health Secretary.

The party was forced into clarifying its position after Tory accusations that Labour was committed to restoring the free checks, which the Tories claimed would cost £216 million. Although Labour has been silent on the issue over the past few years, Tory researchers picked up a recent reply from John Prescott, the deputy Labour leader, when asked if free tests should be given as a matter of routine.

Mr Prescott had said: "Yes, I think it should be a right. You've got to find the money to finance it. I agree, and we have to deal with that particular argument." William Waldegrave, the Chief Treasury Secretary, yesterday challenged Labour to deny the spending proposal.

In the 1992 election, Labour said it would reinstate the free tests, which the Tories abolished in 1989 amid criticism from the opposition parties. Since then, successive shadow health secretaries have examined a variety of options, considering restoring free tests to some groups.

Last year Harriet Harman seriously considered introducing free eye tests for nine million pensioners. But yester-

day Labour made clear that there would be no such commitment at the general election.

Tony Blair did reaffirm one of the party's spending commitments yesterday, promising that women diagnosed as having breast cancer and needing surgery would have to wait no more than two weeks for an operation. The Labour leader promised to end delays and inefficiency in treatment of the disease, which he said triggered a "private and lonely crisis" for many women.

Government figures show that 10,000 women with breast cancer waited more than two weeks for operations in 1994-95; of those, 2,000 waited more than a month. Labour estimates that ending waiting lists for cancer surgery would cost

a third of the £100 million it plans to save in a first year of government by cutting NHS red tape.

Mr Blair's promise, made at the party's annual consultation meeting with women's organisations in London, was greeted with scepticism by a cancer specialist, who said it would be difficult to implement and unlikely to improve survival rates.

Richard Sainsbury, cancer surgeon at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary and adviser to the Cancer Relief Macmillan Fund, said the money would be better spent increasing the number of medical oncologists who specialised in drug treatment for cancer.

"If you come to hospital with a palpable cancer you will have had it for at least six months. Two weeks is a drop in the ocean. Most districts still have a single cancer surgeon who has to take holidays sometimes. We would far rather Labour said they would fund improvements to the cancer service recommended by the Chief Medical Officer, Sir Kenneth Calman."

Britain has one of the highest breast-cancer mortality rates in the world, with 13,000 deaths a year, although the incidence of the disease is in line with other countries.

Mr Blair said: "If you thought more British women are diagnosed as having breast cancer, you would be wrong. It is just that more British women are dying from it and I simply do not accept that we can do nothing about it. There is clearly something wrong with the way the system is working."



Grobelaar and wife, Debbie: "trauma of the trial"



Segers and his wife, Astrid: "He will be cleared"



Fashanu and wife, Melissa. He was a favourite in court



Lim: "I am innocent"

Retrial

Continued from page 1
Mel Goldberg, Mr Segers' solicitor, said: "We are very upset that we could not bash their heads (the jury's) together. It is very unsatisfactory for the defendants, the Crown and the lawyers. I am still convinced he will be cleared and so is he."

Mr Grobelaar held his wife Debbie by the hand and donned his trademark hat as he left court to "recover from the trauma of the trial". David Hewitt, his solicitor, said that Mr Grobelaar was disappointed at the outcome. "Bruce maintains his innocence ... one thing that has emerged during this trial was that Bruce has never thrown or attempted to throw a football match in his life."

He added that the couple and their two children, Olivia, nine, and Tahli, 12, had been under enormous pressure and asked that their privacy be respected.

Mr Fashanu, now a millionaire businessman, left with his wife, Melissa Kassa-Mapsi, mother of his 15-month-old son Amir, refusing to comment. The former Aston Villa and Wimbledon striker had become a favourite among court staff. During lunch breaks he caused traffic jams as he handed out signed photographs to admirers.

Leaving court with his Irish wife, Cora, Mr Lim said: "I have always maintained my innocence and I will continue to do so."

The four men were accused of conspiring to give or accept money for rigging games for a Far Eastern gambling syndicate. The Crown said the plot was uncovered by a "sting" operation by *The Sun* which filmed Mr Grobelaar allegedly accepting £2,000 from Christopher Vincent, a former business associate.

Woman shot in the head on golf course

A woman was in a serious condition after being shot in the head and body while treading off on the seventeenth hole of a golf course yesterday. Her husband was arrested 15 minutes later and six miles away after crashing his car and is being treated in another hospital in Shropshire for the effects of drugs, police said. The 53-year-old woman was playing with friends at Market Drayton Golf Course, playing with friends at Market Drayton Golf Course, said: "A man was hiding in undergrowth and fired several shots at her before leaving the club." The woman, whose name was not immediately released, was shot once in the head and twice in the right side of her body. She was taken to the Princess Royal Hospital in Telford. Police said her injuries were serious but not life-threatening.

Council wins £20m

A judge ruled in the Court of Appeal that the Environment Department must pay the north London borough of Camden an extra £20.9 million in housing subsidy. The Labour-controlled council had argued that there had been a shortfall in its subsidy because of a technical change in its accounting recommended by chartered accountants. The department is considering an appeal to the Lords.

Mountain railway plan

Plans for Britain's first Alpine-style mountain railway are back on track after Scottish Natural Heritage lifted its objections to the £16.5 million development up the side of Cairn Gorm, near Aviemore, in the Highland region, despite opposition from environmentalists. The fanciful railway is expected to be able to carry up to 1,200 passengers to near the summit of the 4,084ft high mountain.

UVF 'behind 25lb bomb'

A bomb found outside the offices of Sinn Féin, the political wing of the IRA, contained 25lb of a commercial explosive — six times more than originally thought. The type of explosive is often used by the Ulster Volunteer Force, an outlawed loyalist terrorist group. The bomb, which was left at the back of the Sinn Féin offices in Monaghan in the Irish Republic on Monday, failed to explode.

Victory for gardeners

A group of organic gardeners has won a planning battle to remain on land owned by the Duchy of Cornwall in spite of the Duchy's support for a scheme to build houses for young unemployed people on the site. The Duchy had offered to pay for the gardeners to move from the Fairpark Allotments, St Columb Minor, near Newquay, to another site so that 19 homes could be built.

Award for Hurley

Elizabeth Hurley will receive her first serious acting award in the United States later this week. Hurley, 31, also noted as Hugh Grant's girlfriend, will be named Best Supporting Actress for her role in *Dangerous Ground*, yet to open in Britain. The ShowWest award, run by the Association of American Cinema Distributors, has been given for her portrayal of a crack-addicted stripper.

Pirate CDs seized

Britain's biggest haul of pirate compact discs has been recovered by trading standards officials. They found 135,000 CDs worth more than £1.75 million, bound for markets and car boot sales, after raiding a warehouse at an undisclosed location in Oxfordshire. Investigations are continuing and arrests may be made under the Trade Descriptions Act and the Trade Marks Act.

Hunt for 'dead' guitarist

Interpol is expected to investigate a claimed sighting in India of Ritchie Edwards, the guitarist with the Manic Street Preachers rock group who vanished two years ago. His car was found abandoned near the Severn Bridge, leading to speculation that he had killed himself. However police are taking seriously a British lecturer's claim that he saw Edwards on a bus in Goa last November.

Football song and dance

Football is being set to music in an initiative between professional composers, an orchestra, Premiership players and a dancing sheep. The Music and Football project, run by the East of England Orchestra and Derby County Football Club — nicknamed the Rams — will see local schoolchildren helping to compose a piece of musical theatre based on the tactics of a football match.

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Evans outburst

Continued from page 1
children. I am horrified that David Evans could stoop so low as to abuse my three children with this foul word. How many parents will agree with David Evans that inspecting schools and raising standards is not a proper job? Janet Anderson, the shadow minister for women, called on Mr Major to dissociate himself from Mr Evans's remarks. And Elizabeth Peacock, the Tory MP for Batley and Spen, said: "It is an outrage. He is the last of the male chauvinist pigs. I thought they had died out with the dinosaurs. But Evans is still walking. He should be ashamed of himself. I feel like kicking him."

But Edwina Currie, the Tory MP for Derbyshire South, said: "I refuse to be offended by this because no

women take him seriously. They are extraordinary remarks. I suspect his wife may be waiting for him when he gets home armed with a rolling pin."

John Mansfield, the Tory group leader on Welwyn and Hatfield district council, was shocked by the comments. He said: "I cannot believe he would say such things. I would not dream of uttering such remarks in public even if I thought them. I have to dissociate myself from his remarks. They are an outrage."

Andrew Douglass, Ms Johnson's agent, said: "I am appalled. I have known Melanie for four years. She is very proud of her family. But they are not fighting the election. She is David Evans is despicable."

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Surprise engagement shortens odds on William Hague as next Tory leader

Cabinet's last bachelor finds love in the office

By CAROL MIDGLEY

WILLIAM HAGUE, the last bachelor in the Cabinet, was celebrating his engagement yesterday to a Welsh civil servant he calls Jolly Jenkins. The couple said that they fell in love in a Welsh churchyard while she was teaching him the words to the Principality's national anthem.

The Welsh Secretary, who is strongly tipped as a future Tory leader, said that he would marry Ffion Jenkins, 29, next year. His colleagues described their four-month courtship as the best-kept secret in Whitehall.

"He is absolutely head over heels with this woman," said one MP. "It has been difficult for him to keep it quiet."

Until recently, Miss Jenkins, an Oxford graduate and alto singer who plays the harp and clarinet, was the No 2 private secretary at the Welsh Office where she and Mr Hague, 35, worked closely together.

Political friends said that marriage would greatly enhance Mr Hague's chance of leadership. "With an elegant wife and perhaps a couple of kids to follow, he will just about make up the perfect leadership CV. The profile is complete," said one. According to the bookmaker William

Hill, Mr Hague's odds of becoming the next leader shortened from 6-1 to 5-1 yesterday.

Yesterday the couple were contemplating more immediate matters. An engagement ring has not yet been chosen but rumour has it that they will buy from Clive Ranger's, a Cardiff jewellery shop that specialises in Welsh gold. "We have not been able to shop together without revealing the secret, so a little expedition will be taking place," said Mr Hague.

The couple met in 1995, when Mr Hague replaced John Redwood as Welsh Secretary and Miss Jenkins was working in the Secretary of State's private office. They have become close only in the past few months. Miss Jenkins began sabbatical leave last week and will return to a senior civil service post in June, although it is not expected to be in the Welsh Office.

Her father is Emyr Jenkins, chief executive of the Arts Council of Wales. Her mother Myra is a Welsh tutor and magistrate and her sister Manon works in the private office of the Prince of Wales at St James's Palace. Her brief was to improve the Prince's standing in Wales.

Mr Jenkins is considered a leading light in the *crachach*, the Welsh Establishment. He worked his way up from being a BBC Wales announcer to become director of the Royal National Eisteddfod, but left in 1993 to take up his post on the arts council.

Miss Jenkins was educated in Cardiff and went on to read English at Jesus College, Oxford, followed by a degree in Welsh at the University of Wales. At Oxford she is remembered as one of the main organisers of the Welsh Society. On one occasion she was rushed to hospital after apparently being cut on the leg by a ceremonial sword at a party. Many friends and col-



Miss Jenkins and Mr Hague in London yesterday. Colleagues described their four-month courtship as the best-kept secret in Whitehall

leagues were surprised by the news yesterday, although Welsh Office aides had suspected romance when, at a recent St David's Day party, Mr Hague had said that he was leaving early to have a meal with Jolly Jenkins.

Julie Kirkbride, the Tory candidate for Bromsgrove, and a close friend of Mr

Hague, said that she had no inkling of the relationship. "I had absolutely no idea, but I am thrilled for them."

"Ffion told me the other day that she was on shopping leave for a bit. Now I know what she was shopping for. She is very bright and very sharp. It will be a real meeting of minds."

Toby Horton, chairman of Richmond Conservative Association in Mr Hague's Yorkshire constituency, said: "This is marvellous news. We haven't met Ffion yet, but William is planning to bring her up to the constituency and we are all looking forward to meeting her."

Mr Horton revealed that the

MP had taken him into his confidence before popping the question ten days ago. The relationship had been going on for a while. "William had to be very discreet but now Ffion has taken a sabbatical and the news can come out. I think that is the right way of doing things."

Asked whether a wife would

be seen as an asset to Mr Hague's political profile, Mr Horton said: "I am sure she will be an asset whatever William does in the future."

From his office at the Arts Council of Wales, in Cardiff, Mr Jenkins said of his daughter: "This is her big day. We are delighted for her - very happy indeed."

Boy hit as he plays chicken on motorway

A BOY aged 12 was last night critically ill in intensive care after he was hit by a car on the M53 near Ellesmere Port, in Cheshire, as he played "motorway chicken". Matthew Wellsbury was watched by a group of children, including his sister, as the car swerved but failed to avoid him as he ran from the central reservation across the northbound carriageway near junction nine.

His mother, Julie Wellsbury, 39, said: "Matthew is being taken for a scan and we are keeping our fingers crossed that he will be all right." She was at her son's bedside at Walton Hospital, Liverpool, with her former husband, Tommy.

Wendy Bridge, 31, a friend of the family, said the boy and his brother Michael, 15, decided to climb the embankment to the motorway. Her son Tony, 13, tried to stop them but then heard the accident.

The RAC called for the security of the M53 near Ellesmere town centre to be reassessed. A girl was badly injured at the same place a year ago.

It said motorway chicken was especially popular where motorway networks were close to residential areas, as in Solihull and Birmingham. One of the worst blackspots has been on the M6 between junctions nine and ten, near Walsall, in London teenagers, sometimes intoxicated, taunt motorists on inner-city streets.

Last September an 11-year-old was killed when he played chicken with a police car on the M8, near Glasgow. An 11-year-old girl lost a leg close to Hamilton, near Glasgow, also last year.

A Cheshire Police spokeswoman said road safety officers had been visiting schools warning children of the dangers. "We are saying we realise they have high spirits, that they can be mischievous but this is not the way to vent a sense of adventure," she said.

Breeder who let horses starve is jailed for cruelty

By DAREH GREGORIAN

A LEADING horse breeder was jailed and banned from keeping animals for life yesterday after leaving his own horses to starve in squalor.

The horses of Leigh-Ann Jeffries, 39, fifteen-year-old Frisbee and four-year-old Heddie, had been weeks away from death when RSPCA inspectors found the emaciated mares in a dingy stable on a farm at Lansdown, near Bath, with no food and a bucket of "black, swamp-like" water.

Frisbee's bones were "hideously prominent", Julie Glynn, prosecuting for the RSPCA, told Bath magistrates. One vet said it was the worst case of emaciation he had seen in 34 years.

Sentencing Jeffries to three months' jail, Francis Hillier, chairman of the magistrates, told her: "The only suitable sentence is to send you to prison because of the extreme suffering to these horses over a period of time. You will be disqualified from caring for

any kind of animal for the period of your lifetime."

Miss Glynn had told the court that RSPCA officers were alerted after passers-by saw Heddie standing in a field in a very poor condition. "The water she had to drink was filthy. There was no evidence of food or hay nets."

Jeffries, a student teacher from Warmley, Bristol, had been riding since she was four, had kept horses for 30 years and wrote articles on them. She lectured owners on how to care for their animals. She admitted two charges of causing unnecessary suffering to horses in May last year.

John Sinnott, for the defence, said: "This is a tragic case of a woman who loves horses and who has always loved horses but has let them down. She was suffering from stress herself."

The court was told that the two horses are back to peak fitness after being rehabilitated at a sanctuary.

Detectives reopen file on death of star's son

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

POLICE in Minnesota are reopening inquiries into the death of the deformed infant son of the pop star Prince. The child died a week after his birth last October and the cause of death was given then as complications from "clover leaf syndrome", which deforms the skull.

The 38-year-old singer and his wife, Mayte, were said to be devastated by the loss of their first child. Officials in Hennepin County, Minnesota, said yesterday that they were reopening the case after homicide detectives interviewed two women, twin sisters Erlene and Arlene Mojica, who used to work for Prince. They were fired by the singer on December 23. Larry Altman, a lawyer for the women, declined to say what they had told the police, but the local medical examiner confirmed that the case would be reconsidered.



Alan Hinkes must scale the six mountains before winter starts in November

'Mad mountaineer' sets sights on six-peak climb into record books

By GLEN OWEN

A BRITISH climber dubbed the "mad mountaineer" plans to be the first man to scale six of the world's highest peaks in one year.

Alan Hinkes, 42, who will climb without oxygen, specialises in tackling mountains that rise beyond 8,000 metres and take climbers into the "death zone" where oxygen is one-third of that at sea level and humans can survive for only a few days.

There are 14 such peaks, all in the Himalayas, and over

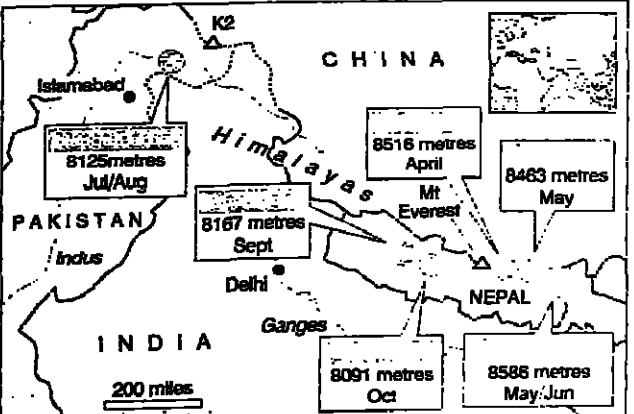
the past ten years Mr Hinkes has climbed eight. His attempt to bag the remainder in a year would beat the previous record of four "8,000ers" and Mr Hinkes would be one of only five people to have climbed them all. He plans to spend his birthday on top of Lhotse.

Announcing his plans yesterday at the Alpine Club in London, he said the £70,000 expedition would begin in late April at the base camp for Lhotse. He will then tackle Makalu, Kangchenjunga, Nanga Parbat, Dhaulagiri and Annapurna 1. He has to finish before winter starts in November.

Mr Hinkes was born in

Yorkshire. He has been climbing since 1972. As a cameraman he has worked on high-altitude documentaries. He said he had been preparing for ten years. "Some may see me as an eccentric madman but I just want to climb mountains," he said.

Mr Hinkes may fly back halfway through to spend a week with his 13-year-old daughter Fiona, who lives with a former girlfriend.



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'It is difficult to live a normal life. The only people I can be myself with are other bereaved parents'



Remembering their children who died almost a year ago: Duncan and Liz McLennan with Abigail; David and Karen Scott with Hannah; Barbara and Martyn Dunn with Charlotte; and Ellen and Sandy Petrie with John

Dunblane families face anniversary united in grief

By ALEXANDRA FREAN
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

ONE year after the Dunblane shootings, in which 16 primary school children and their teacher were killed, the victims' parents say they have learnt to cope with their grief through meeting every week to laugh and cry together.

The meetings, held every Thursday evening in the town's Ecumenical Hall, were suggested to the families by social workers, and have become an emotional anchor in their lives. Les Morton, who lost

his daughter Emily in the massacre on March 13, said: "A lot of people talk about Thursday evenings, that the meetings are the highlight of their week, and I can understand that because it is actually very difficult to live what people might think is a normal life. In a funny way, the only people that I can be myself with are the other bereaved parents, because they are the only people who really know how I feel and I know how they feel."

The parents were speaking exclusively on an ITV documentary, *Dunblane: Remembering Our*

Children, which will be screened at 9pm next Wednesday. The film includes home video clips and photographs of the dead children.

Ellen Petrie, who lost her son John, said: "I look forward to a Thursday night to go and sit and have a blather with the rest of the girls; where we can sit and have a drink, have a laugh and we're not crying all the time. And then the Friday morning I feel fine."

Her husband, Sandy, said: "You can feel your week falling away, all week, and then it comes to the Thursday night and once you've

been there, where the other people know exactly how you feel — and you get that lift."

Liz McLennan, mother of Abigail, said that the members of the families took it in turns to deal with media inquiries, depending on how strong they felt. "There is always somebody ready there to pick up: like in a battlefield, when the guy who holds the banner falls there is always somebody behind to pick up that banner and to go forward."

Martyn Dunn, who lost his daughter Charlotte, said that the other parents had become like an

extended family. He and his wife, Barbara, moved to England after the shootings because of his job, but they visit Charlotte's grave in Dunblane regularly. "Even though we are 300 miles away, we know that the extended family are looking after our interests," he said.

Mr Dunn said that all the families had co-operated with the programme-makers. Only eight of the families agreed to be interviewed because the others had not felt strong enough.

David Scott, father of Hannah, said: "We decided to make this film

to show how, in these tragic circumstances, we can be positive, how difficult it is day to day, how all of our priorities have changed and how the children and Gwen [their teacher] live on."

The parents said they had only recently started talking about the shooting itself. Most of their energy has been spent getting through one day at a time, and supporting surviving children. Mrs Petrie said she took comfort every day from going into her son's room. "In the morning I open his blind and we've got a woollen doll and I'll say,

"Morning wee man", and I know he's not going to answer me but this helps me through the day."

The parents plan to commemorate the anniversary by lighting candles in their windows. They appealed to the media to leave them alone on the day. They said: "As March 13 approaches, we have requested that Dunblane is free from media attention. We trust that you will respect our privacy and we invite everyone to share in remembering our children and their teacher by lighting a candle at seven o'clock on that evening."

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Palumbo rails against trashy train liveries

By JONATHAN PRYNN, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

PRIVATE rail companies defended the colours sported by their trains yesterday after Lord Palumbo, the former Arts Council chairman, attacked the new liveries as "kitsch". Speaking in a Lords debate on design, Lord Palumbo said he despised the colour schemes emerging. "Why should the liveries of privatised rail services be such a rash of kitsch?" he asked.

Six private companies have unveiled the colours for their trains. They range from the menacing dark blue of the Great North Eastern Railway, which has earned its trains the nickname "Stealth Bombers", to the orange and green of Midland Main Line. Virgin, which will operate about half of all InterCity services, plans to paint its trains in its distinctive scarlet, while Great Western Trains has opted for a more sober ivory and green.

Alec Rattray, the account director at Saatchi & Saatchi Design responsible for the Midland Main Line livery, said: "We wanted to signal a change and get away from the idea of the golden age of rail and be more modern. The orange stripes are like 'go-faster' stripes to suggest that sense of speed and zooming along. I think the word 'kitsch' is unkind: one man's kitsch is

another man's good taste."

Rail commentators expressed mixed feelings about the colours, the latest in a long history of livery changes since the nationalisation of the railways in 1948. Roger Ford, Editor of *Rail Privatisation News*, said: "I agree that the Midland Main Line colours are very distinctive but I think most passengers care far more about the service inside the trains rather than the colour of the outside. The new liveries are designed to be seen from the trackside and who stands there apart from train spotters and photographers?"

Older rail buffs still hanker after the distinctive colours of the "Big Four" private companies that were amalgamated to form British Railways — the chocolate and cream of Great Western Railway, malachite green of Southern Railway, teal brown of London & North Eastern and maroon of the London, Midland & Scottish Railway.

Two other operators announced their liveries. South West Trains is to use the Stagecoach bus company corporate colours of red, blue and orange, and Connex South Eastern will be white and blue with yellow stripes.

New trains, page 26

Sheepdip poison plea farmer is sent to jail

By MICHAEL HORNSBY

A FARMER was yesterday found guilty of attempted murder despite his plea that sheepdip poisons had made him incapable of controlling his actions.

Robert Billings, 60, was sentenced to nine years in prison for shooting George Foster in November 1993. Billings, from Warminglid in West Sussex, was given 12 years in jail for the crime in 1994. But the court of appeal quashed the conviction last July after hearing that new evidence about poisoning by the organophosphates in sheep dip had not been available at the original hearing.

The defence at the new trial at Lewes Crown Court said that the chemicals, either by themselves or in combination with severe alcoholic intoxication, had rendered Billings unable to form a specific intent to kill. It was the first time that the effect of exposure to the insecticide used by tens of thousands of sheep farmers had been offered as a defence in a criminal trial. Hundreds of farmers claim to have suffered varying degrees of ill health after dipping sheep from 1975 to 1992.

CORRECTION

Michael Portillo, the Defence Secretary, was educated at Harrow County Boys' School and Cambridge, not Harrow, as reported on March 2.

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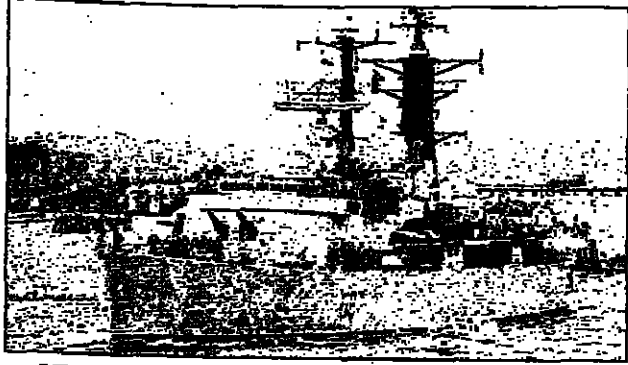
Cleaning ladies go on board to keep destroyer shipshape

BY SHIRLEY ENGLISH

SIX Scottish cleaning ladies have made naval history by joining the all-male crew of a Royal Navy warship during trials at sea, it emerged yesterday.

HMS Newcastle set sail with the civilian Mrs Moppes on board because of a shortage of able seamen. The women, aged between 18 and 43, were drafted in to carry out general duties in the galley and dining hall areas between November 9 and February 3 this year. They had to sign the Official Secrets Act before boarding the Type 42 air defence destroyer and embarking on the three-month trials in British waters alongside 220 navy personnel and soldiers from 3 Para, the affiliated regiment.

None of the six employees from the Aadvark Cleaning Company, in Dunfermline, Fife, had been to sea before and had to take regular doses of anti-sea sickness tablets.



HMS Newcastle, which was cleaned by, from left, Joyce Wallace, Jackie Healy, Liz Henry, Avis Innes, Mitch Bacon and Eve Peden, who joined the all-male crew after signing the Official Secrets Act

Yesterday the Royal Navy said that the presence of the civilian cleaners on the 4,500-tonne warship freed the available HM Forces to "concentrate on other duties".

The women were trained in sea survival and firefighting before the destroyer set sail. They had separate accommodation and their own mess and showers. Unconfirmed reports say that they received a £20-a-week bonus.

Liz Henry, 44, the cleaner's

supervisor, said: "None of us had ever been to sea before on a warship so when they put the idea to us we thought we would give it a bash. It's an experience I would not have missed for the world. It was really quite exciting."

Three of the cleaners were married with children and one was replaced early on because of sea sickness. The longest spell spent at sea was two weeks.

Jackie Healy, 18, from Dun-



fermline, was the last to join the team, as the replacement, and enjoyed herself so much she now wants to join the Royal Navy. "I really enjoyed being on board HMS Newcastle. It was a laugh," she said.

Rodney Currie, manager of Aadvark Cleaning Company, in Dunfermline, said it was a marvellous opportunity for the women. He said that the firm had already had a contract to clean ships during

refits at Rosyth and was asked if staff would be interested in taking part in the sea trials. There was a flood of volunteers.

Mr Currie said: "The women were terribly excited when they went, and when they came back for Christmas they were full of stories. We do a lot of navy work and it's great when our staff get a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity such as this to go to sea. They built up a very good relation-

ship with the ship's company. I think everyone got on well."

He said that on land their job had been to jet-spray clean the ship's superstructure, including the missiles, gun muzzles and lifeboats. But at sea they concentrated on duties in the dining room and kitchen. The company is part of Aadvark Cleaning Company in Portsmouth, which has had contracts with the Ministry of Defence for eight years.

The women joined the vessel

at Rosyth and sailed to Portsmouth where most of the trials took place. A Ministry of Defence spokesman said the women did a valuable job during their time on board.

But he said there was nothing unusual in using civilian staff, although that was the first time three civilian cleaners had set sail.

He said: "It is standard procedure after a ship's refit to take on board civilian personnel but usually it is specialists,

such as engineers. In this case the ship took six contract cleaners to make sure that the Royal Navy personnel were able to concentrate fully on other duties."

The Royal Navy emphasised that the ship was undergoing only trials during the time the cleaners were on board. HMS Newcastle is now fully operational and the six temporary seafarers have returned to their normal duties on land.

More defence cuts a risk to national security, MPs say

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

FURTHER cuts in defence spending will "jeopardise the defence of the realm", an all-party Commons committee said yesterday.

MPs on the Commons Defence Committee said there was a well made case for reversing some of the cuts imposed under the Government's Options for Change review in 1990 and Frontline First in 1994. Understaffed units, particularly in the infantry, were suffering.

The committee reported that the Ministry of Defence was going to save £35 million in salaries in the current financial year because of the staff shortages, most of it from Army pay. The projected savings in future years would rise to £120 million, the MPs said. The defence budget, however, was not being reduced because the savings were being spent elsewhere in it.

Michael Portillo, the Defence Secretary, told the MPs that he was not happy about the situation and would prefer to have the forces fully manned. But the committee said that the shortages in the Army looked set to last for at least another three years. The present undermanning was 5,350, which was forecast to fall to 4,700 by April, to 4,000

in April 1998 and to about 3,000 in 1999.

The shortages had created a vicious circle, the committee said. Soldiers had to work longer hours and spend more time away from home, which resulted in more leaving the Army.

The MPs said: "We insist that the defence spending plans set out in the 1996 Budget must at least be maintained in real terms in future years."

The committee said that major equipment programmes would be vulnerable to delay or cancellation because a large number of them were due early next century. In the financial year 2003-2004, the programmes for an Horizon-class frigate, the Eurofighter combat aircraft, an upgraded Nimrod maritime patrol aircraft and a new RAF anti-armour weapon would be in their peak years of expenditure.

The committee also disclosed that there were 116 outstanding equipment requirements, many of which were very expensive and were also due in service at the same time. They included the Astor airborne surveillance system and Batch 2 Trafalgar class hunter-killer submarines.

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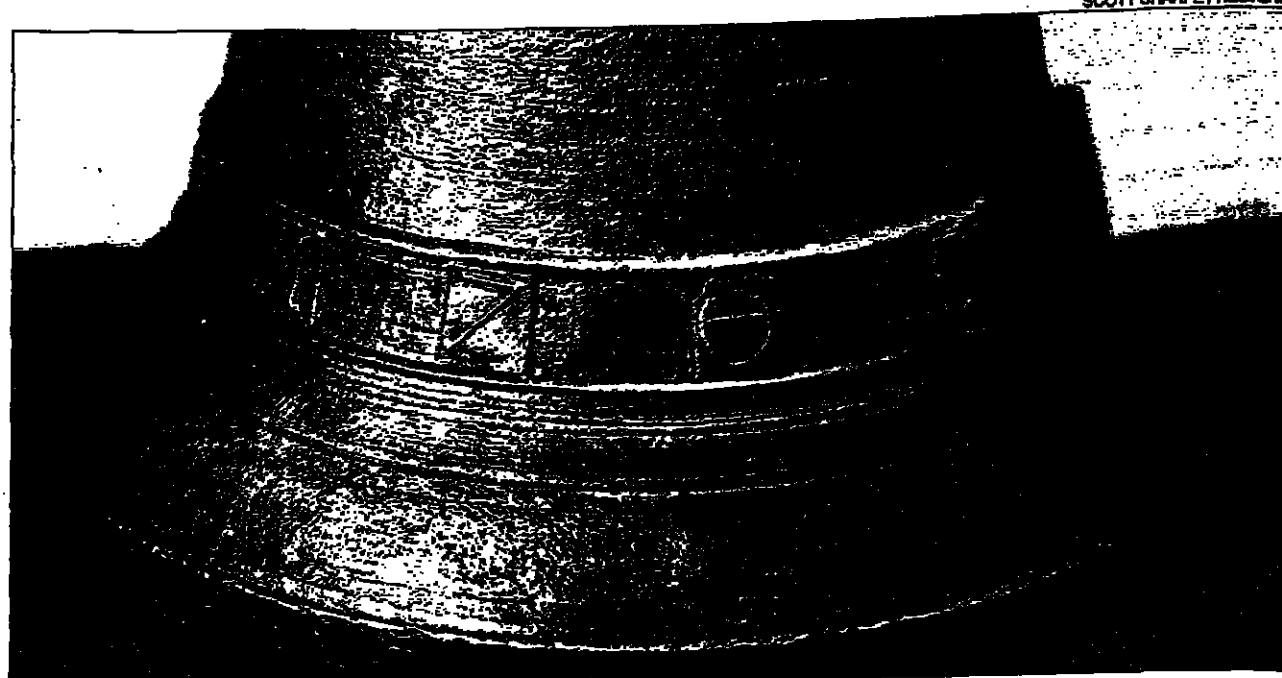
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Ship discovered off American coast rings a bell

SCOTT SHARPE / REUTERS



A bell, cast in 1709, from a wreck off North Carolina believed to be Blackbeard's ship, *Queen Anne's Revenge*

Sea wreck renews hunt for Blackbeard's skull

BY DAMIAN WHITWORTH

THE almost certain discovery of Blackbeard's ship has raised hopes that the publicity will solve the riddle of what happened to the notorious pirate's skull. After a Highlander serving with the Royal Navy sliced Blackbeard's head off with a broadsword, his skull was said to have been lined with silver and used as a drinking vessel in the taverns of the North Carolina coast.

The wreck discovered by American archaeologists 200 yards off North Carolina — the exact site is being kept a secret to deter modern pirates — is believed to be the *Queen Anne's Revenge*, the biggest pirate ship of the time with more than 40 guns. It was hailed yesterday as the most important relic of the golden age of piracy.

David Cordingly, a world expert on pirates and author of *Life Among the Pirates*, said the only other pirate wreck of note was the *Whidah*, which belonged to the rather less celebrated Black Sam Bellamy. The prospect of raising the *Revenge* was "very exciting. This would be the greatest find, very little has been left behind by pirates and Blackbeard was the most famous of all."

Edward Teach, an Englishman who became known and feared as Blackbeard, created mayhem throughout the Caribbean and along the eastern coast of America up to Virginia in the early 18th century. He pioneered psychological warfare by spreading stories about himself. "He doesn't seem to have been terribly cruel; he doesn't seem to have



Blackbeard, right, fighting First Lieutenant Maynard. Shortly after, he lost his head

gone in for torture," Dr Cordingly said. "But he was outrageous. His big thing was to go in and blockade a whole town. Often he was really only after a medicine chest, because all his crew had syphilis. Blackbeard was the most colourful and famous pirate because his death was so dramatic."

Contemporary accounts of his grisly demise in 1718 are found in salt-stained logbooks kept by the captains of the Royal Navy ships that ensnared him, from a report in the *Boston News Letter* and in Captain Charles Johnson's *The General History of Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pirates*. The Governor of Virginia,

exasperated by the failure of his counterpart in North Carolina to "extirpate this nest of vipers", had asked the Royal Navy to go after Teach. They brought their vessels alongside his in the early morning and woke Teach from a drunken stupor.

Blackbeard and Robert Maynard, a first lieutenant, fought with swords and took shots at each other. Teach was wounded but fought on. The *News Letter* reported: "One of Maynard's men, being a Highlander, engaged Teach with his broadsword, who gave Teach such a cut on the neck, Teach saying Well done lad; the Highlander replied, If it be not well done, I'll do it better. With that he gave him a

second stroke, which cut off his head, laying it flat on his shoulder."

Local legend says that when the headless corpse was thrown overboard it swam several times round the boat.

The head was said to have been bought from Maynard by a citizen of Bath, North Carolina, boiled, and the skull lined with silver. It was reported to have been used in taverns along the East Coast as a drinking vessel. Now its location is unknown. "If all this fuss about the wreck could unearth the skull again, it would be wonderful," Dr Cordingly said.

Blackbeard is the inspiration behind a cottage industry in the parts of America that he terrorised. There is a Blackbeard museum on Ocracoke Island, North Carolina, and a Blackbeard Internet site is run from Manteo in the same state. It lists the seafarer's romantic adventures: he had 12 wives, one of whom was a 16-year-old from Bath.

Residents of the islands where the wreck was found are delighted and remain fiercely loyal to Blackbeard. Jim Beach, manager of the *Queen Anne's Revenge* seafood restaurant on Roanoke Island, said yesterday: "Blackbeard was a fascinating guy and we are proud of him. He was certainly a despicable fellow, but we hold him in high regard."

Nelson's hair saved grandson

NELSON'S blood may have been in his veins, but the grandson of Britain's greatest naval hero was not of a military disposition.

In fact, according to a letter to be sold at auction, Horace Nelson Ward's mother went to considerable lengths to ensure that he avoided having to follow in his grandfather's footsteps after being called up in 1848. Horatia Nelson Ward, the illegitimate daughter of

Nelson's liaison with Emma, Lady Hamilton, apparently even went so far as to "bribe" Sir William Burnett, an Admiralty official, by sending him a lock of her father's hair. In an accompanying letter she says: "Permit me again to thank you for your kindness to my son." Now the lock of dark brown hair and the letter are to be sold at Bonhams in London. They are expected to fetch up to

£3,000 on March 13. Alexander Crum Ewing, of Bonhams, said: "The evidence suggests that her gratitude could have been for excusing her son from his naval commitments. The gift might have acted as a guarantee, allowing Horace the freedom to become a clergyman rather than following a career in the Navy. It is recorded that when her son was called up, Horatia burnt the papers."

Gala queen misses out in unequal contest

BY GILLIAN BOWDITCH, SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

GALA queen contests, long a fixture at fairs across Scotland, are under threat after a local authority ruled that they do not conform to equal opportunities guidelines.

Fife council has banned the Miss Craigoun competition at Craigoun Country Fair, the largest fair in Fife, which is run by the council each May near St Andrews.

The girl chosen presents prizes at the fair and represents the area. But the council's East Area Community Services Committee has decided that the reigning Miss Craigoun, Alison Hughes, 17, will be the last. Susan Clark, a committee member, said: "We feel that the contest did not reflect the true spirit of equal opportunities and placed too much

emphasis on how a person looks. We suggested to the advisory group that the fair might want to investigate an appropriate alternative event."

David Sommerville, head of Fife council's community services department, said other such competitions would be looked at in exactly the same way. However, gala queen contests held by voluntary groups would not be affected. Edinburgh council has also banned gala queen contests, saying they are outdated.

The decision has angered some councillors. James Braid, who chaired the judging committee for Miss Craigoun, said the contest was not about beauty. "There is no shortage of people who wanted to take part."

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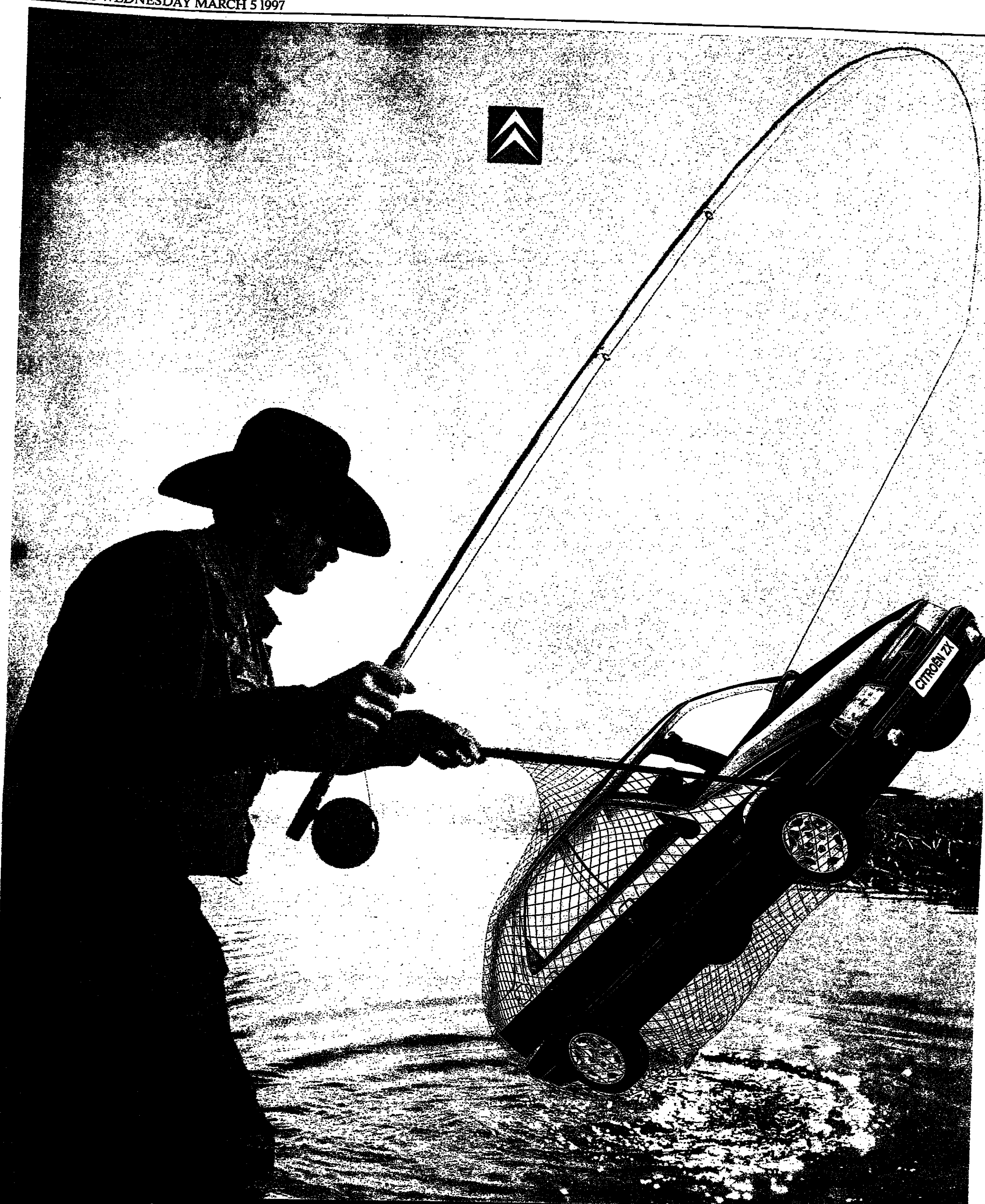
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Parents must pay for youth crime, Howard declares

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

PARENTS could be ordered to pay compensation for acts of vandalism committed by their children or to keep them under night curfew under government proposals to tackle youth crime outlined yesterday. Parents who do not comply might find themselves guilty of a criminal offence and subject to further penalties. Courts could impose fines of up to £1,000, curfews, electronic tagging or confiscation of driving licences.

The proposed "parental control order" was announced by the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, as part of an initiative to combat youth crime, which costs £1 billion a year. Mr Howard's Green Paper, *Preventing Children Offending*, also targets children, including those younger than ten, at risk of "going off the rails". A national network of child crime teams, drawn from police, probation officers, teachers, social workers and health service workers, would identify children likely to offend. The teams would refer the children, and parents if appropriate, to suitable schemes — to be tested in pilot

projects — to divert them from crime. They would also set up data bases of problem families. "Our strategy is to tackle crime at its roots and to give children the best chance of growing up as law-abiding adults. The aim is to act before the child has offended," Mr Howard said. The Green Paper says that 10 to 15-year-olds make up 14 per cent of known offenders and 10 to 17-year-olds 26 per cent.

Mr Howard ruled out lowering the age of criminal responsibility below ten, but the plans would enable children younger than that to be targeted, he said.

Children would not need to have committed any offence to be referred by the teams. Families could be referred if they showed "the existence of a number of risk factors known to be associated with criminal activity, such as poor parenting, persistent truancy, a sustained pattern of antisocial behaviour at school, or associating with known offenders". Mothers and fathers might be sent for training in parenting skills. Magistrates or councillors could be called

in to add weight to the warnings.

The parental control order would be used by courts where parents were ineffective in exercising care or control of children of any age, with no lower limit and even where no offence had been committed. Conditions could be attached, such as requiring parents to take children to and from school; to remain at home during certain hours or make reparation for criminal damage.

Mr Howard said that parents had the primary responsibility for ensuring that children knew the difference between right and wrong and respected the law. "There is a small minority of parents who do not bring up their children responsibly and shun support that is offered."

The new controls could be imposed for up to three years and would be used where the child had behaved in a way likely to lead to an offence, which had resulted in an offence or — if under ten — would amount to an offence if it had been committed by an older child.

Mr Howard insisted that his plans bore no relation to Labour's youth crime proposals which, he said, contained no detail. Labour was proposing "some kind of caution-plus outside the courts system, which is significantly different from a court-ordered caution".

Jack Straw, the Shadow Home Secretary, said the government proposals were a "poor and partial imitation of Labour" plans.

Paul Cavadino, chairman of the Penal Affairs Consortium, said: "The Green Paper is a peculiar mixture of constructive ideas to prevent delinquency, and punitive parent-bashing measures which will do nothing to cut youth crime." Mary Honeyball, general secretary of the Association of Chief Officers of Probation, said: "Parents of children who commit offences generally require help and support. Many are struggling to cope. Fines and curfews will only increase the feeling of inadequacy."



Frederick Forsyth and his wife, Sandy, with the insignia of the CBE after his investiture yesterday; below, Dame Barbara Mills, DBE, and her husband, John.



Jackal has his day at the palace

THE thriller writer Frederick Forsyth met the Queen yesterday and said afterwards that the 500 people present at the Buckingham Palace investiture were more likely to be a cross-section of Britain than the audience at the controversial Carlton Television debate on the monarchy in January.

The author of *The Day of the Jackal* was at the Palace to receive his insignia of the CBE, which was announced in the New Year's Honours List a week before the studio debate in Birmingham, during which he had angrily defended the Royal Family against noisy critics.

After the ceremony Mr Forsyth said all walks of life had been represented. "At Birmingham you got a lot of people with nothing better to do and a lot of people from the inner cities who just wanted to slag off the Royal Family. That was a very loaded audience."

Mr Forsyth said the Queen did not mention his part in defending her family. "She asked if I intended to write another book and I said time alone will tell."

Of his decision to speak up for the monarchy during the television debate, he said: "I felt the dice had been loaded. It became personal instead of theoretical as I had been told it would be. I did not see why I should sit there and say nothing. I got combative."

Among the hundreds of guests being honoured from all walks of life yesterday were senior civil servants and company chiefs, charity workers, a physiotherapist, museum warden, postman and newsreader. Barbara Mills, the Director of Public Prosecutions, invested as Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire, was at the palace with her husband, John, now fully recovered after being injured during a mugging in 1995.

Geoffrey Dear, Inspector of Constabulary, who was being knighted, was there with his father, Bill, 83, a policeman for 30 years until he retired as a sergeant in 1963, and his son Simon, 34, a police constable based in Alton, Hampshire.

No-kissing zone for college

An Oxford college has appointed a "petting officer" to patrol its junior common room after splitting it into kissing and non-kissing zones. Exeter College voted for the move after members complained they were "offended and nauseated by promiscuous activity" in the common room and dinner queue.

Roger Evers, a third-year classics student and social officer at the college, has been asked to enforce the rule.

Heroin raids

Police have arrested 20 suspected heroin dealers in dawn raids in Hampshire, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and London after a surveillance operation lasting five months. Detectives believe they have cut off the main source of the drug in Hampshire.

Actors' strike

All 80 subsidised regional theatres could be shut down by strikes after Equity, the actors' union, rejected a pay offer. The union is pressing for a minimum £250 per week gross salary for its members; the Theatrical Management Association has offered £200.

Fewer fake notes

Forged money seized in Britain dropped to £10 million in 1996, compared with £29 million in 1995. The National Criminal Intelligence Service says this is because it has worked with regional crime squads to put many counterfeiters behind bars.

Battle remains

More than 100 skeletons unearthed during excavations at a former primary school are believed to be victims from the Battle of Lewes in East Sussex in 1264. More than 2,000 people died in the battle. The remains will be reburied on consecrated ground.

Mary coin sold

A rare coin from the reign of Mary Queen of Scots fetched £80,500 at auction. The 1558 gold ducat depicts Mary and her husband and is thought to be one of only five surviving examples. It was bought by an anonymous collector at Spink and Son, London.

PILOT SCHEMES

The idea of nipping criminal behaviour in the bud by identifying children at risk and offering support comes chiefly from the United States, but it is already being tested in projects across Britain. Three kinds have attracted government attention:

■ **HOME START:** A network of nearly 200 home-visiting schemes, which uses experienced parents as trained volunteers to work alongside families with pre-school children. Families referred may be in difficulty because of domestic violence, suspected abuse, debt, children's behaviour or other reasons. Research findings taken from 90 families show that 60 per cent of mothers were "very satisfied" with the service.

■ **CITIES IN SCHOOL (UK):** has devised a "bridge school" allowing teenagers excluded from school to pursue further education and work experience. It is also responsible for programmes designed to reintegrate into schools younger children who have been permanently excluded. In the past three years, 75 projects have been set up. One in three pupils went on to further education and one in four to youth training.

■ **FAIRBRIDGE:** personal development programmes with demanding outdoor activities for those aged 14 to 25 at risk of truancy, school exclusion, long-term unemployment, drug misuse and crime. Monitoring of the project found 81 per cent of participants did not reoffend within a year and 8 per cent found other jobs.

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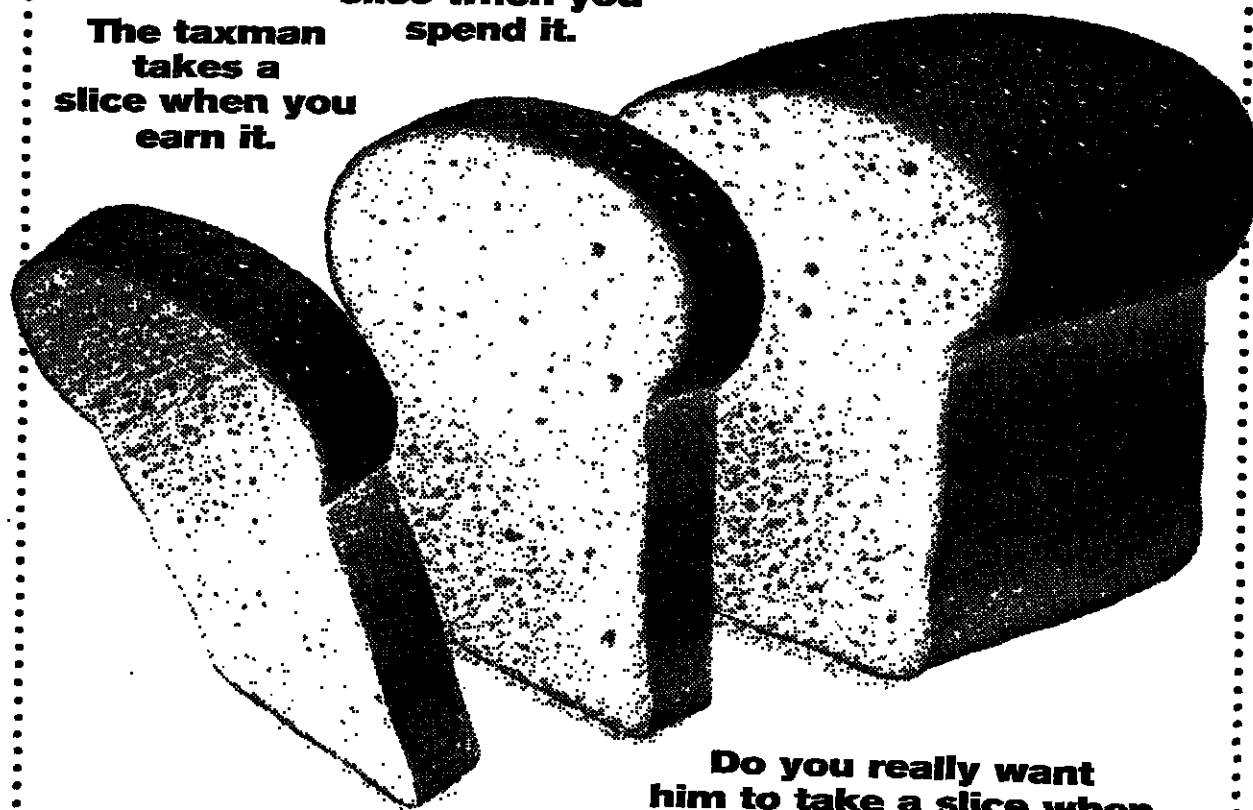
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Hamilton verdict set to be delayed beyond the election

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE former Trade Minister Neil Hamilton is likely to fight the general election with the inquiry into cash-for-questions allegations against him remaining unfinished.

Fresh delays have disrupted the long-running Commons disciplinary investigation into accusations that he accepted gifts to table questions to ministers. A potentially explosive report into his business dealings will not be ready until the end of this month, leaving MPs insufficient time to consider its findings before the Commons rises for the election.

Mr Hamilton faces the prospect of being suspended as an MP if any of the more serious allegations against him are upheld, although he has strenuously denied any wrongdoing.

Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Standards Commissioner, was due to submit a report to the disciplinary committee last week. However, new contradictions in evidence submitted to the inquiry in the last week have forced him to postpone publication.

Sir Gordon and his two assistants are understood to have been "overwhelmed" by contradictions contained in oral and written evidence submitted during the four-month inquiry.

The latest delay is expected to leave senior MPs on the Select Committee on Standards and Privileges with an impossible task to agree a final report into Mr Hamilton's affairs before the election.

If the report had been completed by last week, the committee would have had time to decide whether to publish Sir Gordon's report in full or to hold public hearings then write their own report. Earlier complications had already dashed Mr Major's hopes, voiced last October, that the inquiry would be completed "well this side of a general election".

Mr Hamilton's fate may well depend on when Tory business managers decide to dissolve Parliament. If an Easter recess is called, with MPs returning for the first few days in April, the standards committee will be able to meet during the recess, and publish its report when the Commons returns. However, if Parliament is dissolved before Easter, the committee will not be able to continue its work beyond the dissolution.

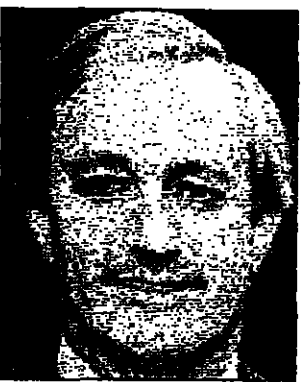
Some Labour MPs are seeking assurances that there will be a pre-election report put to the Commons, arguing that its conclusions could have a crucial bearing on whether Mr Hamilton stands as a general election candidate for his Cheshire seat of Tatton.

However, senior Labour figures are more relaxed, saying that they would prefer to decide Mr Hamilton's future after the election.

Mr Hamilton is understood to be determined to press for a public hearing so that he can defend himself against a range of allegations concerning his dealings with the lobbyist Ian Greer and Mohamed Al Fayed, the owner of Harrods, who claims that he paid Mr Hamilton to ask questions in the Commons. Such a move, which has the support of several MPs on the standards committee, could pave the way for a series of public hearings involving other figures central to the inquiry, leading to further delays.

The 11-member committee had prepared for a series of late-night sessions to try to complete the report, as well as leaving open the possibility of continuing its inquiry during the recess.

Sir Gordon was pressed by Mr Major to complete his work as quickly as possible, and report well before the general election. Mr Major agreed to pass to Sir Gordon any relevant documents and said: "In the interests of natural justice, I am determined that this matter shall be fully examined."



Hamilton: accused of taking cash for questions

Major puts his body language to best use

John Major tested his powers of communication on a radio phone-in yesterday. Peter Barnard assesses his performance

THE bizarre prospect of John and Norma Major queuing outside a Huntingdon trattoria while hard-pressed Italians desert such eateries in favour of the cheaper Irish bars that are springing up in Rome was raised in the space of an otherwise unconnected three minutes yesterday.

Mr Major was supposed to begin answering phone-in questions at 10.45, but at that time BBC Radio 5 Live was still running a programme called *Eurofile*. Listeners expecting the Prime Minister instead heard that Italian youngsters, strapped for cash due, no doubt, to the strictures surrounding currency convergence, had given up eating pasta at an evening in favour of drinking Guinness.

At 10.48 the phone-in began and the first questioner wanted to know why Mr Major did not spend more time extolling the economic recovery by "showing photos of packed airports in summer and winter". Also restaurants.

Mr Major agreed that it was "very difficult to get in restaurants". This may explain why he has in the past been spotted in a Happy Eater.

There were 36,000 callers, 16 of whom got on air. Few qualified as friendly fire. Nick, a fisherman from Cornwall, said: "Ten years ago 80 or 90 per cent of fishermen were Tory, now Tory is a four-



letter swear word." Come down on Newlyn fish quay, one imagines the air reverberating with cries of: "The Tory Spanish have caught all the Tory haddock."

The questioners rounded up the usual suspects: crime, health, education. And Mr Major chanted the usual mantras. There was an exciting moment when he announced the election date.

Well, Diana Madill, the presenter, said: "So is it a fair expectation to have it as May 1 do you think?" Mr Major said: "Well there is a fair

expectation but I think I'll announce it in the normal constitutional way."

The Prime Minister is a better communicator on radio than on television or in the Commons. Body language

matters on television, but Mr Major doesn't have any. In the Commons, Mr Major comes across as a soft man doing a poor impression of a hard one. On radio he is warmer: he comes over as a decent man.

But I detected that the Prime Minister is preparing himself for defeat. Asked

what was his main problem, he said: "Eighteen years is the principal problem... when you've been in government for 18 years you're fighting in a sense a phantom enemy."

The last question was about Mr Major's beloved Chelsea: had Chelsea deserved the penalty that won them a Cup tie against Leicester City?

"I don't think it was a penalty," Mr Major said, but added: "It's a hell of a job being a referee." He sounded wistful, as if wishing he had handed out more red cards in Cabinet, somewhat earlier in the game.

TV advert warns of sectarian violence

By AUDREY MAGEE
IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE horror of sectarian violence was portrayed in a public information film broadcast on television in Northern Ireland for the first time last night.

The 80-second film is an attempt by the Northern Ireland Office to warn people, as the marching season looms, of the dangers of sectarian hatred.

Timebomb depicts a group of children and infants playing happily in a bright toy-filled room. But the atmosphere gradually becomes ominous as radio news interrupts their play with reports of bomb blasts, church protests, civil unrest at Drumcree and punishment attacks, including a crucifixion.

To an arrangement of the Diana Ross song *Do you know where you're going to?*, the room darkens and the film ends with a scene reminiscent of *Child Play*, the video film said to have been watched by the two young boys who murdered Jamie Bulger. The final shot fades out on the face of a young child.

Michael Ancram, the Northern Ireland Minister, presented the film yesterday and said: "This film is, frankly, one we would all wish should never have had to be made. Viewers may find it disturbing, perhaps even frightening. That is not unintentional."

Timebomb is the latest in a series of films made by the Northern Ireland Office to promote peace and understanding in Ulster. It cost the taxpayer £185,000 and will be regularly broadcast on UTV, the ITV channel in Ulster.

The NIO has been making television and radio broadcasts promoting peace in Ulster since the beginning of the Troubles over 25 years ago. Since the late 1980s, the broadcasts have been more sophisticated and thematic.

Plans to compare recent burnings of churches and schools with Kristallnacht in Germany in November 1938 were shelved in the face of severe criticism from historians and Jewish groups. A government spokesman said the idea was still seen as valid and could be used again later.

Mawhinney wins poster row with Saatchi

By ANDREW PIERCE
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE latest Tory poster reached the nation's billboards yesterday only after Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, resolved a dispute between the party chairman and the advertising guru Maurice Saatchi.

The poster, which attacks Labour's economic policy, was presented to a meeting of strategists at Conservative Central Office last Tuesday. The party chairman, Brian Mawhinney, who made clear in weekend press interviews that he was in charge of the election campaign, insisted on testing the poster with focus groups of floating voters.

Lord Saatchi, whose company M & C Saatchi created the poster, refused to countenance the idea. The newly emboldened peer, who has worked on four previous gen-

eral election campaigns, resented the suggestion that his company's work should be market tested.

But Dr Mawhinney, who has the support of Norman Blackwell, head of the Downing Street policy unit, argued that all future posters should be tested. The dispute arose against a background of private criticism at Central Office and Downing Street about the poster of a lion shedding a red tear.

The lion, which was even disliked by the Prime Minister, has been sent back to the zoo because it was deemed to have been a flop. Dr Mawhinney and Mr Blackwell were concerned it had not gone before focus groups before it was displayed at hundreds of sites around the country at a cost of tens of thousands of pounds.

The dispute between Dr Mawhinney and Lord

Saatchi, who is close to John Major, was not resolved by the end of Tuesday night. On Wednesday morning Michael Heseltine, who will play the role of campaign peacemaker between Central Office, Downing Street and M & C Saatchi, decided to intervene. He backed Dr Mawhinney.

The poster, which was unveiled at Central Office yesterday, shows the Labour leader against in red letters "Tony & Bill" alongside the words: "£30 billion spending promises." Underneath is written: "Who pays?"

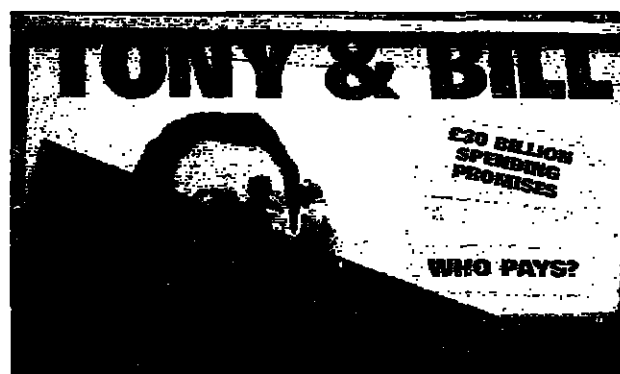
But before the launch was sanctioned it was tested by focus groups, which responded enthusiastically. It was a victory for Dr Mawhinney, but one that confirmed the fears of some Central Office officials that he has not stamped his authority hard enough on the campaign. "Michael Heseltine has the

clout," one official said yesterday.

Dr Mawhinney denied that the lion posters, which have been criticised by the advertising industry, had been dropped because they were a mistake. He said that the lion theme had never been intended to run throughout the campaign.

Labour, which welcomed Ben Chapman, new MP for

Wirral South, to Westminster yesterday, condemned the Tories' new poster. Brian Wilson, the campaign manager, said: "It speaks volumes that all the Tories have to offer is more of the same crude, negative campaigning that failed so dismally in the Wirral. The Tories have now become negative campaign junkies."



Photograph, page 24

The new Tory poster being unveiled yesterday

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Labour and Lib Dems in voting reform deal

By JILL SHERMAN

LABOUR and the Liberal Democrats will today announce a deal on constitutional reform that will include the setting up of a new commission on voting reforms.

Robin Cook, Shadow Foreign Secretary, and Robert Maclennan, president of the Liberal Democrats, will publish a report from a joint constitutional committee that has met in recent months.

Yesterday Liberal Democrat sources said they hoped the agreement would ensure that "an old voting system goes out with an old century". But Labour sources made clear that the party had not given into Liberal Democrat demands for a timetable for a referendum on PR. They suggested the report would merely say that a referendum on voting systems "will not be ruled out in a first Parliament".

The report is, however, expected to propose that a commission would have 12 months to assess the best voting system, behind which all those in favour of electoral reform would unite. The new system would be put as an alternative to the status quo if and when Tony Blair decided to hold a referendum.

IN PARLIAMENT

TODAY in the Commons: from 9.30am, backbench debate. From 2.30pm Scottish questions. Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act (Continuance) Order. Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order. Backbench debate on the Water Censorship Bill. In the Lords: debate on the state of the economy; Lloyd's TSB Bill, second reading; debate on serious delinquency in the provision of medical services, including welfare, for servicemen and their families.

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Half of children's intensive care units could be merged

HALF the children's intensive care units in England could be merged or closed under plans drawn up by a health department committee. Fewer, larger units run by highly qualified staff would provide a higher quality of care for the 12,000 children a year who are seriously injured in accidents or fall critically ill, according to the National Co-ordinating Group on the Provision of Paediatric Intensive Care.

The proposal will raise fears that access to the units will be difficult and comes after complaints that hospitals are repeatedly turning away youngsters because of a shortage of

beds. The Royal College of Nursing said that ease of access was a major concern and any delay in admission could jeopardise recovery. However, the committee says that more beds have been provided and the switch to fewer units must be backed by "retrieval teams" who would go out to fetch children by ambulance.

The pressures were demonstrated last week when a three-year-old girl with meningitis was taken 300 miles by helicopter from Sunderland to Glenfield hospital in Leicester after her parents were told that the specialist treatment

■ A committee set up after the death of a 10-year-old boy for whom no bed could be found has recommended that the NHS runs fewer, larger units for children, Jeremy Laurance reports

she needed was not available locally. The girl, Jodie Levey, died on Monday night of meningococcal septicaemia.

The national co-ordinating group was set up by the Department of Health last year after an inquiry into the death from a brain

haemorrhage of ten-year-old Nicholas Geldard from Stockport after an unsuccessful search for a bed. The committee presented its draft report to a conference of specialists in London yesterday. The final report will go to ministers in May.

Evidence from Britain and abroad shows that children do better in bigger units with trained staff on duty 24 hours. Although the draft report does not specify a minimum number of beds, it says that units must be of a sufficient size to sustain full-time highly qualified staff working exclusively in intensive care.

One paediatric consultant said: "You have to ask what you would expect if your child was in an intensive care unit. I would say I would expect a doctor who knew what was going on to be there 24 hours a day."

There are about 30 intensive care units for children but half have fewer than six beds and some have only one or two. Some beds are also provided in specialist units, such as those treating burns.

The number of paediatric intensive care beds in England rose from 127 in 1987 to 249 last year. Since the inquiry into Nicholas Geldard's death, 31 beds have been opened in the past ten months and another seven are planned to open by next month. The beds cost about £250,000 a year to run and are always under greater pressure in the winter. However, 40 per cent of children requiring intensive care

are still looked after in adult units or on the wards.

The group envisages one or two lead units in each of the eight health regions in England. It says the switch to larger units should be phased in over several years, but in the meantime smaller units must arrange to work closely with their nearest large centre and agree arrangements for the transfer of patients.

An extra £1 million was made available last year to establish specialist retrieval teams and every hospital with a unit will be instructed to provide one.

Pollution alert boosts sales of bottled water

BY NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

SALES of bottled water are booming across Britain as people respond to an outbreak of cryptosporidium in Hertfordshire and north London by shunning tap water.

Suppliers of a leading brand of bottled water said that demand from retailers had risen to more than a million bottles a day, five times the normal figure. A spokesman for Premier Waters, which supplies Evian mineral water, claimed that the outbreak of diarrhoea in Watford, St Albans and north-west London had worried consumers elsewhere.

Last night the number of confirmed victims of the microscopic parasite in the affected area had risen from 32 to 38. The outbreak, which has led to 300,000 households served by Three Valleys Water

being told to boil their water until further notice, comes after a report by the Environment Agency that public supplies are contaminated by pollution and toxic algae.

Premier Waters said: "The main concentration of demand was in the affected area but it was also higher in other parts of the country... sales were above those of summer-time peak demand."

A spokeswoman for Sainsbury's also reported heavy demand at stores in the affected area. "It is too soon for us to tell what is happening nationally," she said. Special consignments were being brought in from Scotland.

Asda sent 78,000 bottles to the area to cope with demand — selling them at a non-profit price. Supplies at the Asda store in Bexleyheath, Kent —

40 miles away — sold out. The Drinking Water Inspectorate, health officials and Three Valleys Water sought to pin down the source of the outbreak yesterday. Cryptosporidium is found in farm manure and food and can be transmitted by contact with infected people.

Three Valleys said it had contacted hospitals, schools, vulnerable customers, dentists, pharmacists and others with information and advice. It said it knew that a pharmacist had claimed that contaminated water had caused an increased level of illness in the Barnet area in December, but Barnet was outside the area currently affected and was supplied from a different water source. Tests at the time had showed no evidence of contamination.



Clean bald: Ian Botham, the cricket commentator and former England player, with a New Zealand policewoman after their heads were shaved for a child cancer charity. Botham hopes to raise £21,000. Match report, page 46

Judge gets clean away with Elvis exhibit

BY EMMA WILKINS

A HIGH COURT judge picked up his Elvis Presley soap and bottle of perfume and walked happily from court yesterday after reserving judgment over the battle of the King of Rock 'n' Roll's name.

Mr Justice Laddie was delighted when told he could keep the £5.99 bottle and £1 bar of soap, which bears the image of Elvis Presley.

The products are manufactured by Sid Shaw, 50, who has built up over 20 years a £3 million business in Elvis Presley memorabilia, trading in Britain as Elvisly Yours.

Mr Shaw, from Shoreditch, east London, is appealing against a ruling last year that gave Elvis Presley Enterprises Inc. of Memphis, Tennessee, three trademarks on Elvis Presley toiletries in Britain.

As Richard Meade, counsel for Mr Shaw, handed over the goods, Mr Justice Laddie said: "Thank you. With these, I could be a millionaire in a few years' time." The court was told earlier that, under American law, Elvis Presley Enterprises was the direct successor to the late singer.

Peter Prescott, QC, counsel for Elvis Presley Enterprises, said: "In the case of someone selling a bar of soap now has not been given some special annotation by Elvis Presley."

The connection was as unlikely as if someone began to sell handbags with the words Margaret Thatcher on them or afterwards bearing the name Disraeli, the judge said.

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Fit that spoiled Liz Taylor's party is not too serious

MEDICAL BRIEFING

Dr Thomas Stuttford

LIZ TAYLOR is reported to have had a seizure during recuperation after brain surgery for a meningioma. She has been readmitted to the hospital where the operation took place but in every other way is said to have made an excellent recovery. A meningioma is a benign tumour of the covering of the brain.

An epileptiform seizure after surgery to remove a meningioma is common. Farhad Afshar, a consultant neurosurgeon at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London, said that the incidence of seizures after removal of a meningioma was as much as 15 per cent. It largely depended on the position of the growth.

In Miss Taylor's case the tumour is reported to have been sited in the brain above her ear, in the region of the temporal lobe. In this position post-surgical epilepsy is more likely. Unless the patient is very old, and the meningioma is causing little trouble, surgical removal is the standard treatment.

The reports on the position of Miss Taylor's tumour make it likely that the operation would have been 100 per cent successful. A spokesman at the Institute of Epileptology at the Maudsley Hospital in London said that a survey had shown that if a patient was to suffer a seizure after brain surgery, 37 per cent would have one within the first week.

After such a seizure patients are prescribed anti-epileptic drugs for at least two years. However, treatment has recently so improved that nearly all patients can be kept free of seizures.

Whereas most brain tumours are more common in men than women, meningiomas are found more frequently in women. The tumours occur at any age but Miss Taylor just comes within the

range when they are most often diagnosed — 40-60: she had to cancel her sixtieth birthday party because of the fit.

As in any brain tumour a seizure is a frequent initial symptom. In other cases meningiomas may cause pressure on a cranial nerve that results in problems with vision, swallowing or hearing. Other patients will notice changes in the power or sensation in their limbs but in many cases the first symptom is a subtle personality change.

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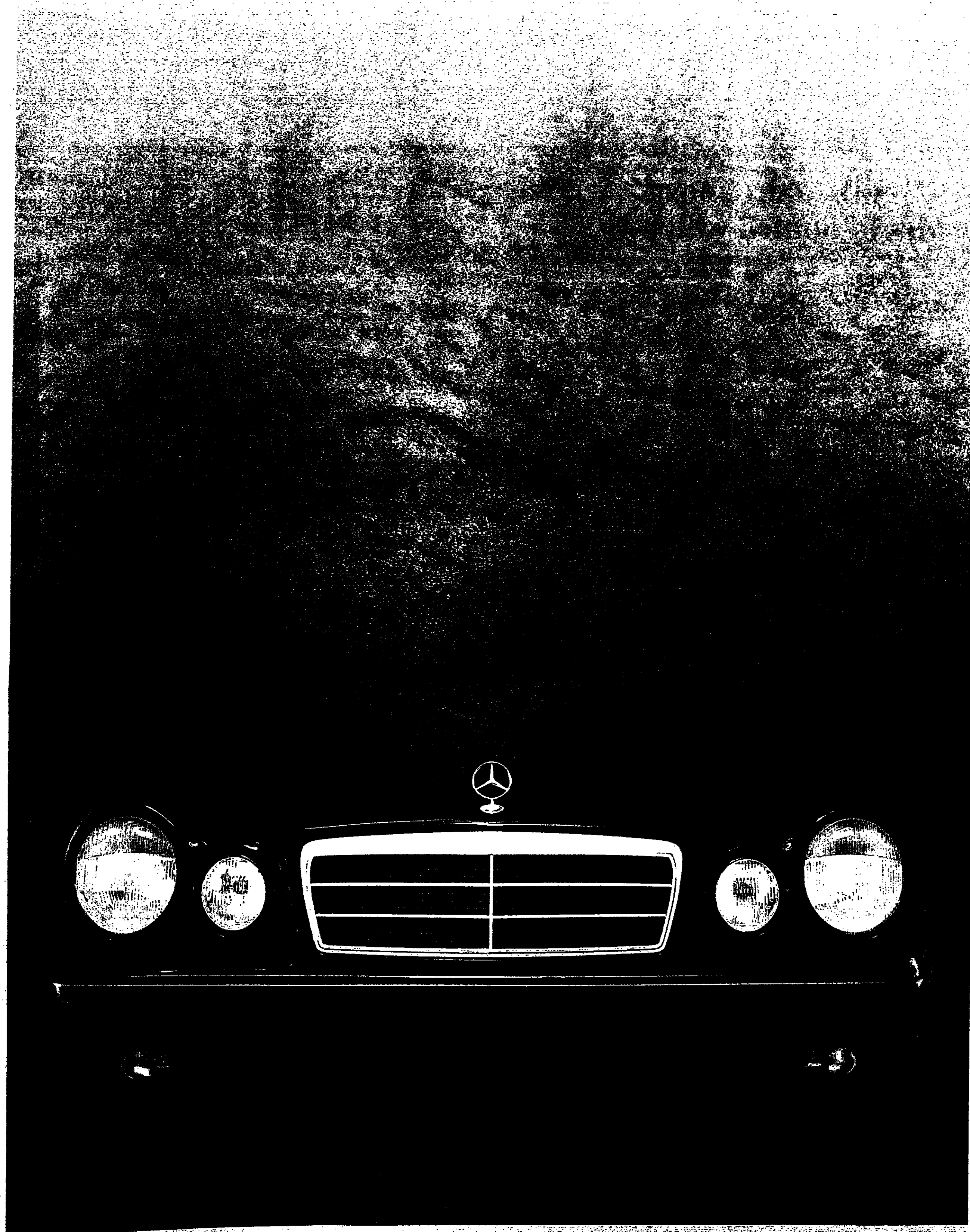
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Battle for final 12 miles to radioactive waste dump intensifies as German activists tunnel under road

Anti-nuclear protesters defy police onslaught

FROM ROGER BOYES IN GORLEBEN

THE German police yesterday launched baton charges and fired powerful water cannon against masked stone-throwing anti-nuclear protesters in a pitched battle to gain control of a country road leading to a radioactive waste dump.

Petrol bombs flew through the air, bursting at the feet of several hundred riot police as the German authorities tried to find a way of transporting some 700 tonnes of nuclear waste to a huge fortified warehouse in Gorleben.

The six nuclear canisters were carried the length of Germany, from Bavaria in the south to the far northeast of the country, in a railway odyssey. Saboteurs sawed through tracks or made hoax bomb alarms and, on the final stretch, two protesters covered themselves with quick-setting cement in an attempt to delay the cargo. "Delay is a kind of victory for us... it gives the Government time to change its mind," said Peter Lustig of the Gusbörn protest camp, one of 14 improvised settlements that have sprung up during this frenzied week of demonstration and rioting.

A few dozen yards away from Herr Lustig's camp was a further sign of the delaying strategy: an approach road to Gorleben which had been undermined in four places by tunnellers. Earth has been scooped out by the barrowload

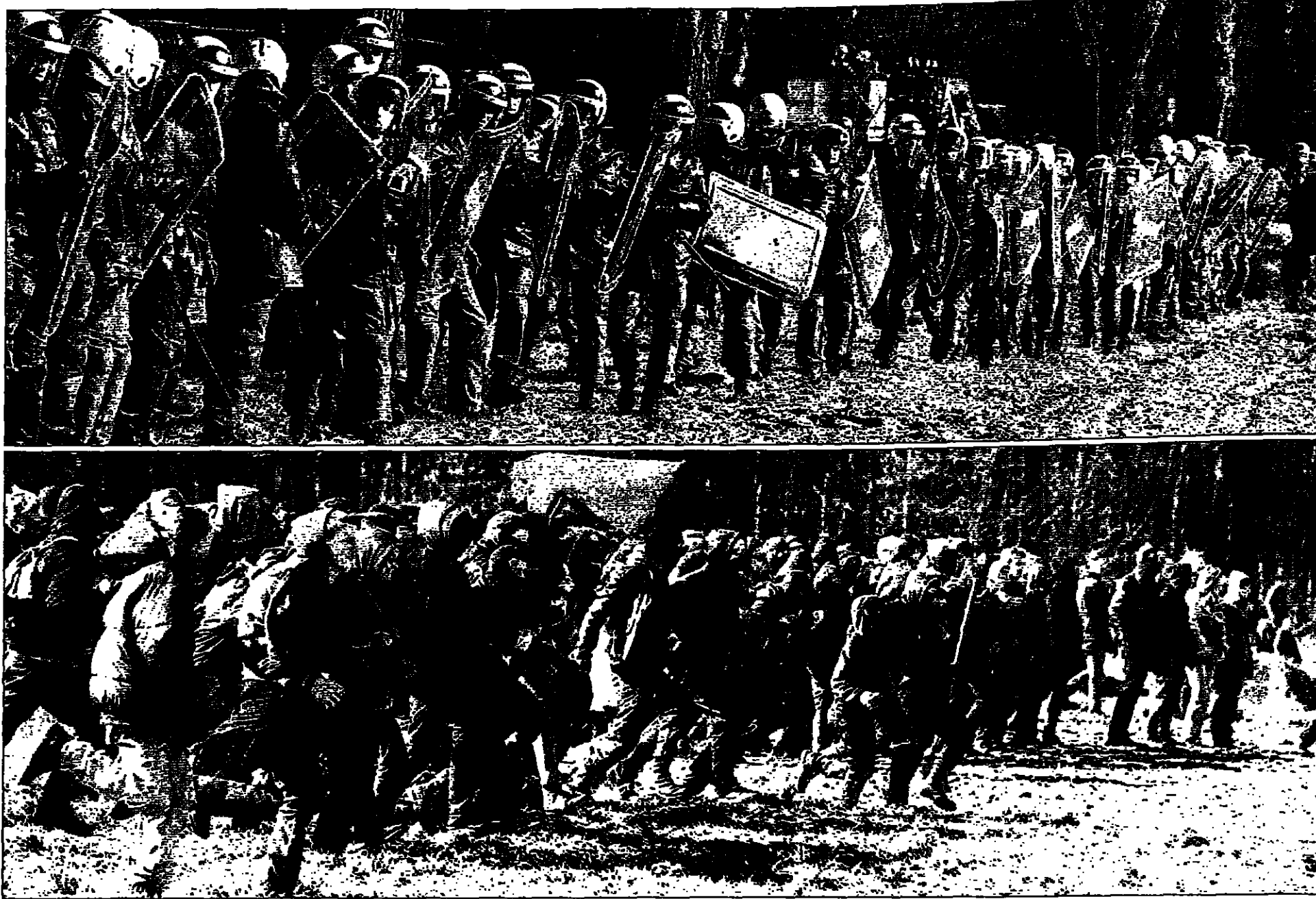
in deliberate imitation of the tactics used by British motorway protest tunnellers.

Yesterday, an official from the highway authority pronounced the road unsafe for the nuclear containers which have now been unloaded from the train and placed on heavy, low-slung lorries for the last 12 miles to Gorleben.

That sabotage — condemned as dangerous by Social Democrat politicians and even by some members of the so-called "resistance" — has switched the focus to the other main access road. This runs through the village of Quickborn and protesters were yesterday promising that the "battle of the Quickborn Road" would be fought today.

The spoils of victory could be huge for the protesters since it would wreck Germany's nuclear energy programme. Jürgen Trittin, a Green politician, is urging the authorities to take the waste back to the south of Germany since it was clear that the population around Gorleben would never accept a nuclear dump.

If all roads were made impassable and the waste had to be returned, the authorities would have to rethink their strategy. That prospect, however remote, has given an edge to the protests. Germany has strict laws on the suitability of roads for heavy-duty traffic and it would not take much to



German riot police, top, and anti-nuclear protesters, above, line up for confrontation as authorities sought to move a nuclear waste shipment to the dump in Gorleben

make them unsafe. Some of the 1,200 inhabitants of the Gusbörn protest camp were preparing yesterday for the Quickborn campaign. Others gathered around a loudspeaker in the centre of the camp — which, with its wig-

wams, resembles an Indian reservation — to hear intercepted police messages. "We have taken two prisoners..." crackled one message. "Wait for further instructions," came the standard reply.

The protesters — tired and

unwashed after two cold, damp nights in an open field — cackled with mirth until a camp orderly told them to switch off the transmission since it is an illegal act to tune into the German police frequency. Although the anti-

nuclear activists talk around their campfires about Gandhi and Mao, they confirm to German standards of discipline. Yesterday, they were dutifully sorting their rubbish according to its recycling value, dogs were kept on leads

and alcohol was banned. The Gorleben campaign taps a German nerve. Farmers, elderly villagers, shopkeepers and teachers all support the militants and close their eyes to the violence because something fundamentally German

— the sanctity of nature — appears to be under threat. Indeed, for generations of Germans brought up on Novalis and other Romantic poets, the defence of nature is a basic right that justifies civil disobedience.

Turkish leader defies military ultimatum to halt Islamic drift

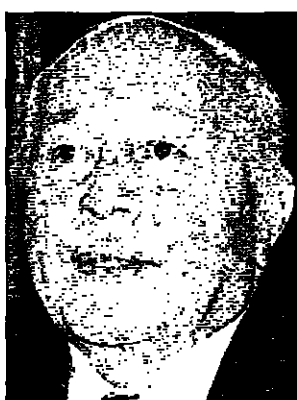
FROM ANDREW FINKEL IN ISTANBUL

TURKEY'S pro-Islamic Prime Minister, Necmettin Erbakan, yesterday defied threats by his military to force him to halt what they see as the country's drift towards radical Islam.

He told supporters that he would not resign but would soldier on as the defender of democracy and the sovereignty of parliament. "That is it. No more discussion," he told his Welfare Party MPs ahead of a planned opposition motion of no confidence, which was rejected by parliament.

The supporters made it clear that they had no intention of implementing a strict package of measures produced by the military.

However, the Turkish armed forces are unlikely to retreat from their ultimatum, issued after a nine-hour meeting of the country's National Security Council last Friday. Commentators have described the meeting as being nothing



Erbakan: will not leave office without a fight

short of a military coup by stealth.

The council promised to enforce "sanctions" if the Government failed to root out "anti-state activities concealed in anachronistic guise".

The published communiqué also reiterated Turkey's desire to join the European Union. Many of the measures the

military seems to be proposing are themselves anachronistic and incompatible with Turkey's European ambitions. They include reinstatement in some form of Article 163 of the penal code used to combat religious propaganda against the state.

The military also wants stricter enforcement of Article 174 of the Constitution, which safeguards some of the initial radical reforms of the Turkish republic. Among them are the now neglected prohibitions against Islamic dress and religious brotherhoods.

The forces are clearly alarmed at the spread of a radical Islamic counter-culture in many urban centres of Turkey, through private Koranic schools and secret organisations.

The generals are believed to have presented Mr Erbakan with intelligence reports suggesting that Islamic militancy has overtaken Kurdish separatism as the country's number one threat.

The military's list of about 20 demands, however, appears designed to make it impossible for Mr Erbakan, whose Welfare Party campaigned for fuller Islamic rights, to continue in office. He has made it clear that he will not go without a fight.

His one comfort is that he knows the military will hesitate to antagonise domestic and international opinion with a full seizure of power. An attempt to prune the Welfare Party by force risks making it grow stronger.

The military's outspokenness is a reflection of widespread frustration in Turkey that the Welfare Party managed to gain power last July with only 21 per cent of the vote. Mr Erbakan skillfully exploited a personal enmity between the leaders of the two centre-right parties.

The generals are trying to exert pressure on one of the parties, the True Path, led by Tansu Ciller, to pull out of the ruling coalition.

EMU delay 'requires new treaty'

Bonn: Helmut Hesse, a member of the Bundesbank council, was quoted yesterday as saying that a delay in launching the European single currency would force the renegotiation of the Maastricht treaty, and its ratification by EU member states.

Herr Hesse, in an interview with the *Nordsee-Zeitung* of Bremerhaven, also said the efforts of some countries to join economic and monetary union did not mean that the Maastricht criteria could be ignored.

"At the moment, all member states are wildly determined to fulfil the criteria and be there at the start. It would be a loss of prestige to miss the start," he said.

But, he added: "We must insist the criteria are strictly observed because the entry of Germany is only allowable under the constitution if the currency union is stable." Record postwar unemployment has pressured state finances and put reaching the criteria into doubt. (Reuters)

Nato chief says Moscow ready for security deal

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

NATO and Russia are about to begin work on the text of an agreement that will lead to a new strategic security partnership, Javier Solana, the alliance's Secretary-General, disclosed yesterday.

He said he believed that the Russians would agree to the partnership and that it was hoped to complete a deal before the Nato summit in Madrid on July 8. Señor Solana, who was speaking during a visit to London, is flying to Moscow this week-end for negotiations with Yevgeni Primakov, the Russian Foreign Minister.

The increasing confidence within the alliance that Moscow will reach an agreement was reflected in a meeting yesterday at Downing Street between the Nato Secretary-General and John Major. Downing Street sources said the Prime Minister and Señor Solana agreed that there were positive signs that Nato and Russia could agree on a new

security relationship. Although Moscow continues to oppose Nato's plan to offer membership of the alliance to several former Warsaw Pact nations at the Madrid summit, the detailed negotiations between Señor Solana and the Russians over the past few months had proved constructive, the Nato chief said.

Addressing the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Señor Solana said: "We are about to begin work on the text of an agreement. The atmosphere is constructive. I do not want to minimise the difficulties, but I believe they are interested in a partnership with Nato and that we will conclude one." He said there was "movement and momentum" in the discussions. "What we are willing to conclude with Russia is of far-reaching importance for the whole of Europe."

There was no question, he added, of "buying Russia off" or compensating it for the

alliance's proposal to extend further east. "Like the enlargement process itself, the development of our relationship with Russia is part of a wider transformation of Nato that will be good for Russia, good for Nato and good for the whole of Europe," he said.

Señor Solana said that critics of enlargement appeared to forget that it was part of a broader strategy to create a more stable and secure Europe: "I see a great tendency to highlight the difficulties and speculate about the consequences of enlarging Nato, but far less attention to the far greater implications of not doing so." To maintain Nato as a "closed shop" would be to keep the countries of Central and Eastern Europe "imprisoned in their past".

Dismissing claims that enlargement would be hugely expensive, he said that opening Nato to new members would be a "good bargain and a sound investment".

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Paralysed Frenchman tells his story in the wink of an eye

FROM SUSAN BELL IN PARIS

A PARALYSED former magazine editor has written an acclaimed book using the only part of his body that still moves — his left eyelid.

Jean-Dominique Bauby, 44, was the editor-in-chief of *Elle* until he suffered a brain haemorrhage on December 8, 1995, which plunged him into a coma. When he awoke he

was permanently paralysed from head to toe. He could not speak and needed help to eat and breathe. Only his brain and one eyelid functioned normally. M Bauby was diagnosed as suffering from "locked-in" syndrome, a rare neurological condition in which the part of the brain that sends commands to the body is destroyed.

The former editor, who has described his condition as being like

a prisoner trapped inside an old-fashioned diving suit, nevertheless resolved to write a book. Just over a year later, M Bauby's courage and determination have been rewarded and *The Diving Suit and the Butterfly* will be published by Robert Laffont on Friday. Described by *Le Figaro* as poignant and distressing, the book is widely considered to be a tribute to the resilience of the spirit.

Translating the flight of the butterfly

onto paper was an agonisingly slow process. Every day for a year, Claude Mendibil, an editor with Laffont, came to M Bauby's hospital room in Berck-sur-Mer, 50 miles south of Calais. She recited an alphabet in which the letters are ordered according to the frequency with which they occur in the French language. When she arrived at the desired letter, the paralysed man would wink and Mme Mendibil

wrote the letter down. By that laborious process, words and sentences and eventually whole pages of text were created.

M Bauby has not lost his sense of humour. Interviewed in *Elle*, he said: "I love the story of Claude going to a café after one of our long 'dictation' sessions. The barman gave her a big wink and she burst out laughing, leaving the poor man completely baffled."

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Netanyahu defies US by ordering start on settlement

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

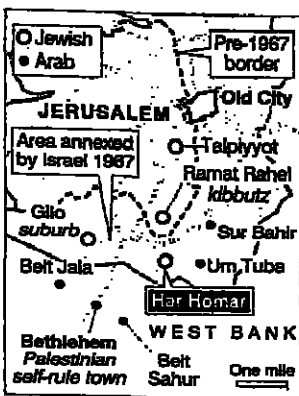
THE Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, defied criticism by President Clinton and other world leaders and vowed yesterday to start work within a day on a settlement in occupied Jerusalem that will provide homes for 6,500 Jewish families.

Diplomats said that Mr Netanyahu's rejection of American opposition to the work at Har Homa had put the biggest strain on US-Israeli relations since his election last May over Mr Clinton's preferred candidate, Shimon Peres, of Labour.

Har Homa, which many observers will see as a new round of Israeli-Palestinian clashes, is Prime Minister Netanyahu's reference to work on the hill between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. "It is two weeks from the standpoint of the bulldozers. From the standpoint of the survey work, it is only a few days. We are determined to go on building in Jerusalem."

The Prime Minister added, in the face of increasing pressure at the United Nations against the project: "If it were not for the legal restrictions, the bulldozers would have been on Har Homa yesterday and not weeks from now."

Mr Netanyahu denied that a brief delay in sending in the surveyors had been in order to



minimise the inevitable hostility he will face during a visit today to Egypt, where President Mubarak has spoken of the grave dangers posed by Har Homa to the fragile peace process.

The Israeli leader brushed off remarks made in Washington where Mr Clinton sided with Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, saying that plans to build on occupied land theoretically the subject of future Israeli-Palestinian negotiations would fuel mistrust. "There was nothing new in what he [Clinton] said," Mr Netanyahu told the radio. "The Americans understand our policy well."

He said that Mr Clinton had also made clear to Mr Arafat that America would not tolerate violence. Many Arabs

and Israelis have voiced fears that the first flashpoint could come as early as Friday when the Palestine Liberation Organisation is trying to organise a mass prayer session at the site.

A senior PLO official said Monday's general strike in the West Bank and Gaza was "the first angry message, which will be followed by more powerful protest measures".

After warnings that violence could be worse than that sparked last September by the Israeli opening of a tunnel near Islamic holy places in Jerusalem, Israeli tanks and snipers have been placed on alert in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. At the first sign of concerted trouble, an iron-fist response codenamed Operation Field of Thorns will be launched.

Israel captured east Jerusalem in the 1967 war and soon after annexed it, a move still not recognised internationally, which is why the embassies of the world powers are situated in Tel Aviv.



PERE DURAN / AP

Warrior's final retreat

The Spanish Foreign Ministry has bowed to pressure from African diplomats and belatedly ordered the removal of an African warrior who was stolen from his grave, stuffed and put on display at the Museum of Natural

History at Banyoles, near Barcelona (Michael Dynes writes). A boycott of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics was threatened by African protesters unless the Senegalese warrior, known as El Negro, was removed from display, returned to his homeland and given a dignified burial.

The warrior has been displayed in a glass case, and largely ignored, in the Spanish town since 1916. The stuffed warrior, exhibited alongside an ape and a monkey, had shocked some visitors.

Professor Welshman Ncube, head of the University of Zimbabwe's public law department, described the draft as vague, arbitrary and open to abuse.

Zimbabwe drafts law to allow race bias

FROM JAN RAATH IN HARARE

A BILL to legalise racial discrimination in the form of affirmative action in Zimbabwe's business sector is expected to be introduced soon. Critics say it will fan increasing tension between blacks and whites and entrench corruption.

A draft of the "Prevention of Discrimination" Bill proposes to extend prosecutions for discrimination beyond public services to the denial of personal finance and the refusal to sell property.

The main thrust of the Bill is a clause which permits discrimination when it is to advance "persons disadvantaged by past discrimination". The draft is a response to a vociferous campaign over the past seven years by black businessmen to have white businesses excluded from state contracts and to force banks to grant loans to black businessmen at preferential rates.

Professor Welshman Ncube, head of the University of Zimbabwe's public law department, described the draft as vague, arbitrary and open to abuse.

Rabbis keep the lid on frontline cornflakes

BY CHRISTOPHER WALKER

REAL soldiers want a real breakfast — cornflakes. But the Israeli Army's rabbis have infuriated the men by delaying the request because of strict Jewish dietary laws.

The army said this week that cornflakes have recently been added to the daily ration of combat soldiers, but are not yet being served because small, and often dangerously exposed, army outposts in areas such as occupied southern Lebanon are not equipped

to store the milk separately from meat products.

Jewish dietary laws require a separation of all dairy and meat products. Cheese packaged in sealed containers can be stored in the same kitchen as meat, but milk needs its own container which can be found only on larger military bases.

After expressions of anger from combat troops, who have already been suffering morale problems over their conditions, the army said that it was considering changes to enable the fighters to start the day with their favourite meal. The changes would involve the purchase of long-life milk which enables cornflakes to be added to the standard frontline breakfast rations of bread, eggs, tomatoes and cucumber.

Such has been the pace of social change in Israel that off-duty soldiers are able to enjoy that most non-kosher of delicacies, a cheeseburger, at a large new McDonald's in Jerusalem.

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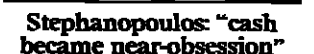
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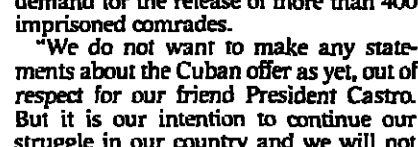
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At last, the real clothes show

LONDON

Beautiful basic clothes for real women are back in fashion, says Iain R. Webb

During London Fashion Week, which ended on Friday evening, one critic described the latest collection by the designer Betty Jackson as "real clothes for real women". What, then, were the luxurious navy reefer jacket by Clements Ribeiro, the sleek, brown skirt suit by Alexander McQueen, or the exquisitely tailored leather trouser suits by Antonio Berardi, if not real clothes?

The autumn/winter 1997 collections featured some really good clothes, but more often than not these fine fashions were obscured by the designer's need to make a statement or give the catwalk show an edgy feel. To be thought of as "edgy" (as in at the cutting edge) is perhaps the ultimate accolade for a designer at present. It implies they are ultra-hip. Sadly, it also means their shows tend to be a bit pretentious or, in several cases, just plain ugly.

What possesses a designer to dress up some of the world's most beautiful women to look as if they have taken part in a "dirty protest" backstage (Berardi); been kept in a freezer for more than a month (Philip Treacy); or have a bloom in their cheeks so rosy it looks as if they have been hit with the vase as well (Jackson)?

At present, the fashion pack is obsessed with all things weird. They shy from the sensible, balk at the becoming and would not be caught dead applauding anything close to commercial.

Yet, more than ever this season, beyond the facade of horror-story hair and make-up and high-drama presentation, London showed that fashion can be enjoyed by everyone. If a nation of women sighed when they read that the mini was back at Miu Miu, then, what the heck, wear the just-below-the-knee pencil skirts by Katharine Hamnett. If all you really want to buy next winter is a sweater, make sure it's plum, grey or bottle-green. If you want to update your wardrobe with a new accessory, get a knee-length, high-heel boot (best at Amanda Wakeley by Gina).

There were a few pleasant surprises (in store at the end of August, care of Sonja Nuttall.



Left to right: SONJA NUTTALL: Assured. CLEMENTS RIBEIRO: Sheer delight. ALEXANDER McQUEEN: A soft edge

English Eccentrics, Workers For Freedom and Jean Muir), while designers such as Ben de Lisi and Wakeley continued to make the most of their strong points: fluid cocktail and party dresses in smoky pink, plum, and purple, or luxurious minimalism cut in cream, butter, milk chocolate, grey, and shocking pink respectively. Both designers offered versions of the little black dress.

Design duo Pearce Fionda kept their fans happy with seriously shapely suits and slinky jersey separates, including a sexy double-layer split pencil skirt. Mostly monotone, and with a turban or two thrown in, the collection was made for a movie queen: Norma Desmond.

There was little change from Bella Freud and Jasper Conran — kooky, colourful and eclectic at Freud, while Conran showed his unique brand of grown-up glamour: feathers and leathers.

Nuttall returned with her strongest and most assured collection to date — everything from dove grey or navy windowpane check and pinstripe trouser suits worn with cami-sole tops or ribbed sweaters, to diaphanous metallic rose-print dresses, sometimes tied about the waist with a cashmere scarf. "Basic, beautiful clothes," says Nuttall.

The collections of English



Eccentrics (designed by Helen David) and Workers For Freedom were equally exquisite. David offered ultra-soft knits and sumptuous velvets alongside fragile-looking beaded pieces. Best of all was a honey-coloured, short-sleeved roll-neck sweater worn with a long, matching skirt in duchesse satin, all wrapped-up in a sparkling organza shawl. WFF favoured equally seductive fabrics and a vaguely oriental silhouette cut in suede, silk, velvet and geor-



gette, coloured honey, brown, red and pinky hues, plus the obligatory black.

There was a fresh modern mood at Jean Muir — little sweaters worn with knee-length A-line skirts, colourful velour stripes, punched suede, strappy camisole tops teamed with trousers or long skirts, and a neat, boxy leather jacket.

Long georgette dresses in navy and black were pure Muir. Tomasz Starzewski gets better each season — his elegant mix of brocade, satin, fake fur



and leather looked sleeker than ever. At Mulberry, the accent was also on luxury, from the sumptuous sheepskins to a strictly tailored bronze brocade suit or full-length wraparound skirt edged in wine-red velvet.

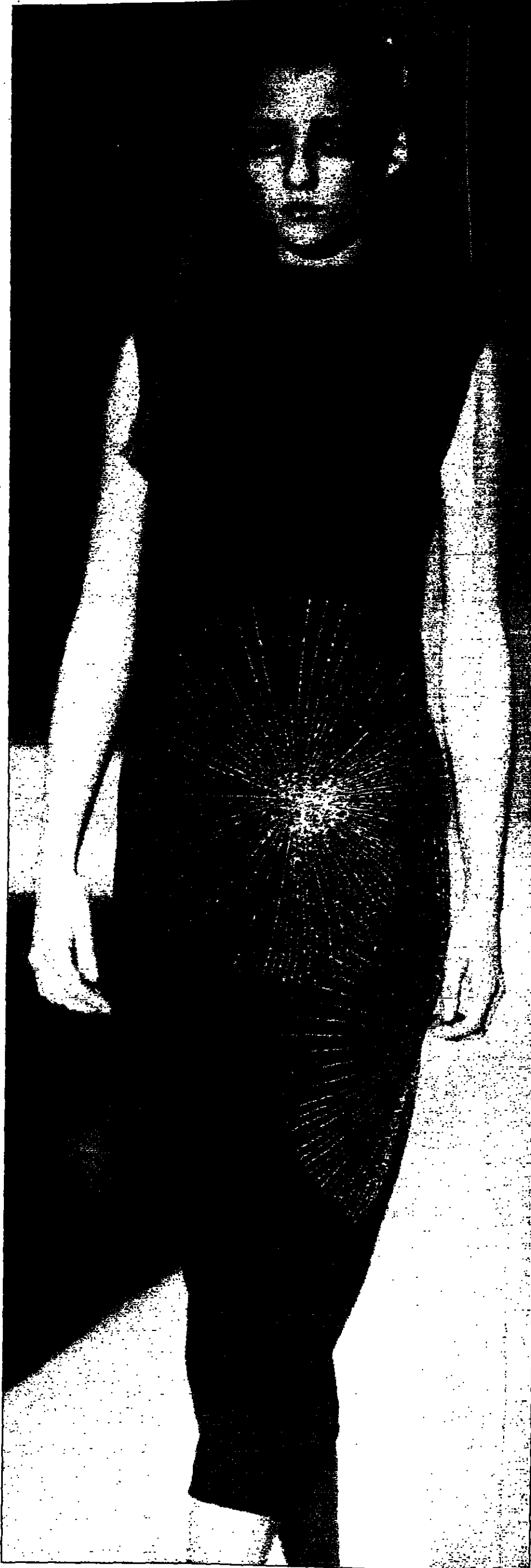
Many designers, including Miu Miu, Nicole Farhi, Betty Jackson, Margaret Howell, Katharine Hamnett and Paul Frith, played around with mannish looks mixed with distinctly feminine touches — a wool or tweed coat over a sparkling sheath or a sliver of velvet, sportswear and glamour, leather and lace, sheepskin and sequins. Somewhat surprisingly, sheer is still an option for winter. Come on Mr Frith, get over it!

Berardi and Copperwheat Blundell made much of sexy, hard-edged tailoring, with great leather jackets and second-skin dresses. Berardi added pretty frilly chiffons while Copperwheat Blundell favoured furry fleece.

Knitwear fans will be pleased to see Lainey Keogh and Julien MacDonald on the London schedule. Both spin their own kind of magic with wool — rich and textured at Keogh, lightweight and airy-fairy at MacDonald.

If there was a wish-list this season then three names would be on it: McQueen, Hussein Chalayan and Clements Ribeiro, designers who have broken away from the pack and firmly established their names internationally.

McQueen, for all his histrionics that threaten to cloud his vision, is unique. This season he portrayed the urban jungle



HUSSEIN CHALAYAN: Pure elegance made modern with razor-sharp cutting skills

with a breathtaking mélange of fabrics — sometimes patchworked together on the same outfit.

He starts by softening his tough edge with flowers. Aside from some quite awful "working-girl" looks (stretch denim leggings and Big Bird jackets), this collection screamed success.

It was pure elegance at Chalayan, made modern with his razor-sharp cutting skills. Slick tops and trousers (best in black or smoke blue) were followed by mohair sweater-dresses and slinky jersey col-

umns. His suits (in black or bright red) followed a pencil-slim outline, while his tasselled and beaded evening dresses were the epitome of clean-cut chic. One black jersey dress with a firework starburst design was simply divine. The design duo Suzanne Clements and Ignacio Ribeiro make great clothes that are full of ideas — folksy motifs covered everything from smock dresses to seamen's jackets, while a sheer black shift slipped over a brightly coloured floral dress. Alongside the bolder looks

were stripey knits worn with baggy pants, sleek trouser suits and the smartest daytime mix of a reefer jacket, rollneck sweater and slim below-the-knee skirt. It was a finely tuned collection which showed just why the husband and wife team have won such acclaim.

This season London Fashion Week turned out to be a real treat.

Photographer
CHRIS MOORE/
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Iain R. Webb is the fashion
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The McAlpine memoirs: Day Three - Parkinson is thrown to the wolves



Cecil and Ann Parkinson: Margaret Thatcher had told him that there was no need to resign, but advised him to reflect on the effect that carrying on might have on his family

The Parkinson affair surfaced in the summer of 1983. The Prime Minister rang me in Australia to tell me that John Selwyn Gummer was to be appointed to the chairmanship of the party. Gummer was totally different from Parkinson: where Parkinson was open and generous, Gummer was not. He was a politician not in the grand mould of Parkinson, Ridley or Tebbit.

When the party conference came in 1983 it was in Blackpool. Cecil Parkinson, instead of a hero, the winner of a great election victory, went to that conference as if he were a man on trial. Gummer distanced himself and took what could be regarded as the moral high ground. Making no attempt to save Parkinson, he left his colleague to the political wolves. The advantage was to himself. As Gummer's efforts at charming the Conservative Party were puny by comparison with those of Parkinson's, it must have been a matter of some convenience to watch his predecessor come unstuck. It appeared that, as far as Gummer was concerned, Parkinson was about to receive just punishment from God for his adultery.

John Wakeham rallied the whips. In all the years I have attended party conferences, I can't remember one where so many whips took the trouble to come to Blackpool on the day before the conference opening, a day when normally nobody was about except the serried ranks of the press. Sadly, the whips were not there to save Parkinson's career, rather to put an end to it. Michael Spicer set out to try to save him from a ministerial resignation. Gummer took Spicer's actions extremely badly and began to regale him and myself with a litany of all the awful things that Ann Parkinson had said about Spicer. As there was nothing that

An invitation to a hanging

THE PARKINSON AFFAIR

Confessions of
THATCHER'S
BAGMAN

Ann Parkinson could say or do that would make Spicer dislike her more than he disliked John Gummer, these words fell on deaf ears. As Michael Spicer and the Parkinsons were exceptionally close friends, I was shocked that Gummer should repeat the contents of what was obviously a desperate outburst by Ann Parkinson delivered in a private conversation at a time when she was under immense pressure. It was clear to me that the purpose of repeating that conversation was to alienate Michael Spicer from the Parkinsons.

Much later, when John Major came to power, I warned him, in print, that he should not put his trust in Gummer. "He is," I wrote, "not the sort of person that you would risk going for a walk with in St James's Park, let alone the jungle." Gummer has begun to wither on the ministerial vine. Feeding his small daughter with hamburgers during a BSE scare, along with his general sanctimonious air will surely, in time, do for him.

The first evening of the conference, I gave a party as usual and Parkinson was there. He had made a good

impression on the press. He was to speak at the conference the next day. The hall was electric with excitement; the organ tinkled: it was as if we waited for a wedding. This was going to be one of those moments that those habitués of party conferences wait for and discuss for years afterwards. Cecil made his entrance. There was polite clapping where there should have been ecstatic applause. This man had, after all, devised a strategy that had won for his audience an election. The speech was of average quality, perfectly respectable and, considering the circumstances, downright brilliant. At the end the applause was at first supportive, but the chairman did not rise from his

seat nor continue clapping. The Conservative activists took their cue from John Selwyn Gummer: his was the party line. It was not a wedding that they had waited for, but a trial and as they left they wondered at what time would be the hanging.

Again that evening I gave a party for the senior figures of the media. Cecil and Ann Parkinson came and Cecil almost enjoyed himself. I felt terribly sorry for Ann. It was getting late, so Ann took him to their room. Half an hour later, Ann appeared in deep distress. *The Times* had rung through the text of Sara Keay's letter that they would publish the next day. Ann, Shirley Oxenbury and I went up to Cecil's bedroom, a small room at the back of the hotel. There followed the most extraordinary human drama that I have ever witnessed.

First, Robin Butler came with a message from the Prime Minister. Cecil was not to worry about *The Times* article: they would discuss it in the morning. Earlier, Margaret Thatcher had told Cecil that there was no need to resign, but advised him to

reflect on the effect that carrying on might have on his family.

Cecil and Ann prepared for bed. Shirley Oxenbury and I offered to leave. They both insisted that we stay and, as they bustled themselves changing into their night clothes, they kept up a dialogue, he expressing his love for her and the fear that she might leave. "I love you. I could never manage without you," he kept repeating. Ann reread and rerehashed the problems of the day. Their small room was walled with mirrors, the images of the two of them were everywhere I looked.

Robin Butler had brought whisky and pills and soon both Ann and Cecil were asleep. We had arranged to meet early the next day. By then, however, it was all over. John Cole, the BBC's political editor, had rung Cecil shortly after 8am. Unfortunately, the hotel switchboard put him straight through. Cecil had told the BBC that he would resign. That morning was frantic. Michael Portillo, Cecil's PPS, looked after him as best he could. The telephone kept ringing: the press was going mad.

I was angry at what to me was a gross injustice and I was surprised at the vicious cat fight that had occurred among colleagues, the way they had set about Cecil Parkinson as though he was a wounded animal and they, the rest of the pack. The conference finished that afternoon and tomorrow was another day. Parkinson did recover his career, but it was never the same. I visited him the day he took up his post as the Secretary of State for Energy. He sat at his desk in his Millbank office. He was signing papers. *I drinking champagne.* "I am giving away thousands of pounds," he said. I inquired what he meant. "These are resignations from my directorships," he said, pointing at the pile of letters. Parkinson was back on a ministerial salary.

'What was meant as an act of kindness cost a life'

Most of the summer of 1984 I spent in Australia, returning for the party conference. I gave a party and my suite was packed with journalists and politicians, businessmen and party officials. It was nearly 2.30am before the party ended.

I had, when I was deputy chairman, got into the habit of going around the ground floor of the conference hotel to see that all was quiet. I set out to do this at about 2.30am. On the stairs I met Anthony Berry returning from walking his two dogs. We gossiped for a while.

In the normal course of events, Tony Berry would not have had a room in the centre of the Grand Hotel, except for two coincidences. Tony had been involved in a charge of drink-driving. By chance, Lord King was vacating his room early as he had to return to London on business. Tony Berry was given Lord King's rooms. What was meant as an act of kindness cost Tony his life. After I had talked with Tony Berry, I decided not to go downstairs as was

my normal habit. I returned to my room and went to bed. I awoke on hearing a loud explosion. My bed was covered in plaster, the room full of dust. I switched on the lights and they worked. I looked out of the window to see the floodlights illuminating a huge cloud of dust.

My first thoughts were of immense relief. Those of us close to the leadership of the party had suspected that this would happen sooner or later. Now the attack had been made and I had survived. I looked out into the hotel's passage, a part of which seemed to have disappeared. I gathered together Richard Ryder, who was totally dazed having been in a deep sleep, and Michael Spicer, who had been in the bath. Out through the bathroom window we went, intending to go down the fire escape. Coming up that fire escape, however, was a group of hysterical Spanish women. We managed to turn around this stampeding herd of Spaniards

THE BRIGHTON BOMBING



The Grand Hotel in Brighton

and sent them all in the right direction. Out in the street, I ran around the hotel to the front. I was among the first to get there. The street was deserted except for the police.

At first sight, the Grand Hotel stood there as if nothing had hap-

pened to it. Its facade was illuminated by yellow floodlights, a cloud of yellow dust hanging in the air. Then I could see that right in the centre of the hotel's facade was a hole staring at the second floor and extending for several storeys. Out of the hotel came the most terrible cries. The sight and sounds will never leave me.

I hurried to the Metropole, a new hotel not far from the Grand. There we set up a party headquarters. Many people were of the opinion that the conference should close. Margaret Thatcher had been taken from the Grand to secure premises not far away. There had, however, been a hitch as she was leaving. First the police sent out of the hotel a double, in case there were marksmen hiding near by. A head was seen to rise over a parapet. Margaret Thatcher's departure was delayed.

Among the many problems of opening that conference on time the following morning was that most of

the hierarchy of the party had nothing to wear. We had to get them clothes, and quickly, and we decided the answer was to open Marks & Spencer as early as possible. I had, with a number of other people, found my way to Edward du Cann's rather grand suite in the Metropole. I used his telephone to ring Marks & Spencer's head office.

I spread the word among Brighton's taxi drivers that anyone without clothes was to be brought to M&S. I would, I told them, settle the fares. Luckily had a considerable amount of cash on me. Standing outside the Marks & Spencer store, I waited for the first taxis and soon they came thick and fast. Inside, clothes were found for all those who needed them. I am proud to say that they never looked smarter. The £10,000 bill was paid by Central Office. It was quite illuminating afterwards to note which members of the party and the Government asked to pay for their new clothes and which members let the matter pass.

Do you pay the cleaner in guilt?

Domestic work is no more 'them and us' than any other employment

I suppose it shouldn't come as a surprise that the number of people in domestic employment has risen over the past five years: after all, with more and more working couples, somebody's got to keep house. Consequently — as a new survey by the GMB union shows — the total has grown by 16 per cent, going from 142,000 people in domestic work to 166,000.

I doubt these figures are accurate: the real numbers must be much, much higher. After all, cleaners and domestics tend to work for cash and are highly unlikely to be giving their details to the union's leader, John Edmonds. They indicate to him that we are living in an "us and them" age.

Mr Edmonds clearly thinks domestic work is demeaning, but surely he must see that it is that very belief which insults those who clean for a living. I would agree that domestic workers are routinely exploited and underpaid by their employers, but from what I can gather it is cleaning work in the public sector or large institutions that is the most exploitative and underpaid.

I have in the past employed people as cleaners who have also worked in hospitals (NHS and private); there, the conditions are worse and so is the pay. Cleaners tend to be treated as a job-lot of skivvies, interchangeable and expendable: their employers have little regard for them individually, and indeed may not, properly, know their names.

Cleaning work is necessary work, for those who do the cleaning as well as those for whom they do it. Without wishing to sound too worthy, I'd say that it is essential that such work is respected. And I don't believe it can be respected if employing a cleaner must be a guilty secret. I would be surprised if cleaners didn't come in to clear up the offices of the GMB: does Mr Edmonds feel bad about this?

If he does, he would be rare among men. For the most part, men seem unperturbed about paying someone else to clean up after them (they seem pretty unperturbed about not paying someone to clear up after them, for that matter). It is women who feel ashamed about it. And I think men have got it right here: for surely we shouldn't feel embarrassed about paying someone to do a job, provided we pay them properly.

Those who feel the worst are probably the ones most likely to pay badly. After all, if you think there is something inherently shameful about paying someone to clean, that it is an act of slovenliness and extravagance, then the more you curb that "extravagance" the better you'll feel. If you can justify having someone in because it doesn't cost that much, or because you can congratulate yourself on finding a

bargain, I'm afraid it doesn't make you a very good employer.

I think most women do feel guilty about employing a cleaner though, and at least it benefits the cleaner if the guilt spurs you on to pay over the going rate. (It would be better if a minimum wage existed, so that employees weren't dependent on the whim of an employer's nature.) But the guilt itself must be annoying for the cleaner.

I have worked as a cleaner (I was a chambermaid in Italy between school and university) and I never minded the work, provided I was allowed to get on with it. Admittedly, it wasn't for life, and I don't pretend it was that or starvation — but it was the only job I could get at the time and I was happy to do it.

Most of us, though, have an irritating habit of apologising before asking someone to clean an oven or



Nigella Lawson

iron a shirt. We feel we should be doing it ourselves, or that the cleaner is thinking we're despicable slatterns for not. But I expect the cleaner would much rather we paid her properly, treated her with respect and thanked her for her work, rather than apologised for it. It is a discourtesy, apart from anything else, to make her feel that the very employment you're asking her to undertake is an insult.

Perhaps an element of guilt is inevitable after all, one is paying someone to do the jobs one can't bear to do oneself. And domestic employment is bound to be a sensitive area, because in the home one doesn't have the distancing, neutralising structures of office and professional life. The relationship is more intimate and the notion of giving orders or exercising authority — even if neither is ever expressed as such — jars.

The reality is, of course, that cleaning work is no more "us and them" than any form of employment: there is always the person who pays and the person who is paid.

Evelyn Waugh had in *Scoop* a revolutionary who shouted at waiters in restaurants because the usual obsequies maintained the iniquities of the class system. I can't help feeling that union leaders who inveigh against those who employ domestics are behaving in much the same way.

TOMORROW

Christmas at Chequers



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YAMAHA

Alan Coren



What's got eight limbs, all-round vision and goes for a spin in safety?

You have to hand it to Reed Personnel Services. Quite what it is you have to hand to them, mind, must remain a matter of personal choice: some of you may wish to send them a big bunch of daisies, others may prefer to foot the bill for a major shrink, not a few may feel that the kindest act would be to leave a Liger on Reed's doorstep with one valedictory cartridge up the spout, but whichever each chooses, all must surely agree that, in recognition of their latest corking wheeze, the nation's top recruitment honchos deserve everything they get.

They have already got much. They have got 1,000 new ideas for the next government. Since this is rather more than 1,000 times the number of new ideas possessed by any of the parties currently begging to form that government, you are entitled to ask where Reed got all these new ideas from; the answer is from 38,000 Britons they recently mailed, thereby tapping a vein of amateur political inventiveness to such haemorrhage that, beside it, the professional one has been exposed as the thrombotic item it is, so clogged with clots as to betray even the most restrained back into extended metaphors he can scarce control. And also to leave him spoilt for choice: ought I address myself to the suggestion that all MPs, before being allowed into the chamber, should be breathalysed, ought I consider the wisdom of offering free martial arts lessons to OAPs, ought I to conflate the two and envisage that joyous day when 659 drunks forced to moom the Commons forecourt are set upon by mobs of kung-fu grannies incensed by the House's failure to — a third new idea, this — provide them with free fresh fish? None of these. I plump today for a yet more radical notion, not only because it addresses what Reed identifies as a prime area of concern (roads), but also because its wondrous wackiness invites me to trump it with a new idea of my own far more likely to mitigate that concern.

The Reed-borne idea is to fit a pointed steel spike to the centre of every steering wheel, thus ensuring road safety by persuading motorists to drive everywhere very slowly, to avoid ending up *en brochette*. Now, knowing drivers as I do, I could conclude only that this idea must have been sent in by an undertaker, so at once began working on mine. Call it Idea 1,001. It is, admittedly, a longer-term solution than the spike, but this in no way diminishes its electoral clout, because, for the next few weeks, the idea is all that counts, and mine is unquestionably one whose time has come.

For this is a genetic time, so the solution to our gravest worry must surely be not to destroy unsafe motorists, but to create safe ones. And the reason motorists are unsafe is that man was originally designed to move at a top speed of 15mph, for which two eyes, four limbs, slow reflexes, and frangible bones were perfectly adequate; if he crashed into another man, each got up, shook himself, and trotted on. But when man invented a tin box empowering him to move at ten times his natural speed, his natural kit proved to be so unfitted to cope with this that he began killing himself and his kind in unrepeatable new ways. Man, it turned out, was not made right. The solution, therefore, lies in his genes.

Or will. His genes must be tinkered with. Man needs three limbs for the pedals, two for the wheel, one for the gearstick, one for the car-phone, and one to lash out at off-spring distracting him from behind. He also needs eyes both in the back of his head and on either side of it, a body able to be hurled through the air without injury, and reflexes keyed to split-second evasive action, in any direction. Also, it wouldn't hurt if, on top of all this, he had a mouth programmed to snap up any intruding fly dumb enough to buzz hazily across his vision.

Yes, you have twigged. I am talking about the arachnid gene: rush the Spider Bill through on May 2, and within a generation, only those able to show the examiner they can read eight number-plates simultaneously and run up the MOT wall will be granted a licence. As to which party will triumph with this little winner, who can say, but Reed's think-tank must be delighted that, for once, Lord Sutch is in there with a chance.

Peter Brookes
5th 97



A FRESH LOOK AT YOUTH CRIME

Two faces of Englishness

However different, the squire and the sybarite were both defenders of excellence

Two men of my acquaintance were laid to rest last week. Family and friends gathered at the respective churches. Eulogies were delivered on happy lives and successful careers. England bade farewell to its sons with due ceremony.

The two could not have been less alike. One was a Cavalier, the other a Roundhead, one an Anglican, the other a Dissenter, one a Tory, the other never. Drape the one in a Union Jack and he would cheer; the other would groan. Both would term themselves middle-class, but the contrast between them was almost Disraelian, "inhabitants of different planets, formed by different breeding, fed by different food, ordered by different manners". Yet both were English, indeed together they were the warp and woof of Englishness. One was Sir Joshua Rowley Bt, late Lord-Lieutenant of Suffolk. The other was Christopher Driver, late of *The Guardian*.

Sir Joshua was the 7th Baronet, of Tendring in the county of Suffolk. He began his career at Eton, Cambridge and the Grenadiers. His rubicund face and jovial smile used to beam down the dinner tables of Suffolk, down which Rowleys had beamed since the 18th century. Though descended from administrators, Rowley followed his father into the Guards. He served in Africa and Italy and was captured by the Germans. After the Army, he married a viscount's daughter and settled down as squire, farmer and county grandee. Suffolk landscape was his life and his love, low hills and wide valleys, hedges and spinneys, guns and dogs, half-timbered, claret and Constable. Rowley worked with (squires do not work for) the National Trust, and rose to be chairman of Suffolk County Council. He had an East Anglian's care for money, but was no philistine. He collected books and pictures and wore his culture with an easy charm.

The family once shared with Poles, Bacons and Greeces a suzerainty over southern Suffolk. They formed the refrain to "Froggie would a'wooing go", an otherwise obscure reference to the four families as "Rowley, Poley, Gammon and Spinach". The Rowley seat was Tendring Hall at Stoke-by-Nayland, built by John Scane in 1784 for a Rowley ancestor. The house decayed and was sadly demolished in the 1960s. Sir Joshua wrestled with its demolition and committed himself through the National Trust to saving such houses in future.

He held onto the Tendring land with its sumptuous views over Dedham Vale. Restoring Stoke church was a life's work and he was buried last week in the shadow of its great tower. A grave could ask for no finer guardian.

In days when local government was as proud a service in England as it still is in the rest of Europe, Rowley ran Suffolk. To him, politics was the ordering of land, service to parish and county, and to the Crown through the lord-lieutenancy. London for Rowley was Purdey's, Pratt's and the MCC. Parliament was for younger sons, tradesmen and oddballs. Real men ran counties.

This was the politics that the Thatcher-Major Conservative Party has torn apart. Inspectors, directors and John Gummery were sent to tell Sir Joshua Rowley and his successors that they could not be trusted to fix so much as a penny rate.

Mr Gummery knew better than a Rowley what was good for Suffolk. Rowley's last on this subject was pure Colonel Blimp. The smile froze, the eyes bulged, the red of the cheeks darkened and the veins appeared ready to burst.

Rowley was a conservative but not a pessimist. He was sure that Suffolk would survive the assaults of London politicians, as the National Trust would survive its "confounded bureaucrats". But conserving Suffolk was a perpetual battle. It needed the commitment of those who knew buildings and land, who felt an obligation to those who worked them. It needed local autonomy, money and a fear of God. Above all it needed people like Rowley.

I wonder how Christopher Driver would have described Rowley. Driver was the son of a Nonconformist doctor-missionary in south India. His parents had money enough to see him through a similar educational mill to Rowley's. He went to the Dragon School, was head boy of Rugby and read Greats at Christ Church. Yet as Cambridge could not

divert Rowley from his paternal course, nor could Oxford divert Driver. Not for him the Grenadiers but, as a conscientious objector, the Friends Ambulance Service, followed by the news desk of the *Liverpool Daily Post*. Not for him the deputy secretaryship of the National Trust, but the editorship of *The Good Food Guide*. Driver was, as Bill Webb recalled in last week's *Guardian*, "a Christian with mandarin tastes, a serious sybarite and a bit of a snob".

I venture that only an English reader could fully appreciate the nuance of epithets applied half-admiringly to Driver that would be offensive applied to Rowley. The gulf is not cultural, and is only partly social. No war, politics, business or profession was likely to bring these two together.

Rowley's rural Toryism would have been anathema to Driver's urban radicalism, and vice versa. Driver's career began with that colonial service of left-wing journalism, a sojourn on a northern newspaper. But he soon returned to his natural habitat in Highgate, where his family played quarts and worshipped at what is now the United Reformed Church. The nearest he came to business was maintaining his father's antiquarian bookshop in Dorset.

The apex of Driver's career was his controversial editorship of *The Good Food Guide* in 1970-82. He was chosen by his predecessor, Raymond Postgate, as much for his radicalism and classical education as for any culinary skill. The *Guide* was a "herbivore" reaction to the awfulness of British cooking in the 1950s. It savaged bad food camouflaged by flashy presentation, and was duly detested by big hotels and *haute cuisine*.

I once dined with Driver at the new Inigo Jones restaurant, surrounded by stained glass and piped Mozart. He sat bearded in his tweed jacket and red tie at a side table to which his appearance had consigned him. He spent the meal wrestling with an imperious waiter who constantly tried to remove his bread roll. If Sir Joshua Rowley's food was the

roast beef of old England, albeit served with a noble Pomerol, Driver's was steamed brill and mangetout. His fall-back was chicken korma with saffron nan; he lauded the Chinese and Indians for bolstering English catering through its darkest post-war years. But when the Young Turks of the bistros graduated to smart restaurants in the 1970s, Driver was attacked as a killjoy. He gave not an inch, deriding his critics as "a branch of showbusiness". Eventually, *The Guardian* claimed him back, to bring a unique elegance to writing about food. His book *The British at Table 1940-1980* is a masterpiece of sardonic prose.

Driver's town pursuits were as varied as Rowley's country ones. He wrote on the Free Churches, Schubert, universities, CND and poetry. Some Englishmen wear incorruptibility on their sleeves. Driver would have been a preacher in Cromwell's New Model Army, had he not been a pacifist. That his integrity was dedicated to, of all things, restaurant cooking may seem eccentric. But like the best intellectuals, Driver was "silent in seven languages". He would have murmured as he perused another menu, "God is in the details".

Perhaps I can find here a final meeting of the ways. In my last conversation with Rowley, I recall his fixation with "getting the countryside right". This was not a matter of balancing subsidies, of conceding a housing estate here or a bypass there. Rural England required faith, and faith without shortcuts. If Dedham Vale could not sustain a way of life, it would simply be "The Constable Experience". Social and natural ecology were indivisible. The landscape would not conserve itself. To Sir Joshua, this was today's *noblesse oblige*.

Rowley would have cried Amen to Driver's *Times* obituary. It recalled his acerbity towards all who wrote a sloppy word or served a heavy sauce. "He was not inclined to reassure those who betrayed their calling by letting standards slip," it said. For him, standards were equally a well-judged soufflé or a well-turned paragraph, as for Rowley they were a well-laid hedge or a well-timed royal visit. For both men, attention to detail was a token of excellence. In their divergent walks of life, both saw that excellence threatened and desperately sought of defence.

As of last week, the ranks of the defenders are depleted by two.

A united states of the euro?

America's founders show the way, says

Gary L. McDowell

Malcolm Rifkind's speech in Paris this week laid bare the deepest issue in the debate over EU and the push for monetary union: Britain's continued independence and the future of the nation-state. No doubt his speech will do little to quiet the snarling and snapping, but he at least has history on his side, as even the most cursory glance at the original American debate over federalism reveals.

Many of the questions now being raised in Britain were at issue during the creation of the United States Constitution in 1787-88. The concerns that led the Americans to draft their new Constitution, like those that have led Europe towards greater integration, were economics and trade. The sovereignty of the federated states under the Articles of Confederation (America's first Constitution) was not conducive to the kind of co-operation that a union of states has to have to encourage commerce. To remedy this, the states resolved to meet and reach agreements on how best to unite in order better to serve their common interests. As various efforts failed to produce the needed agreements, they were eventually driven to what became the Constitutional Convention of 1787, at which more far-reaching decisions were taken and the nature of the confederation was drastically changed.

A key element of this transformation dealt with the power to coin money, regulate its value, and to establish the value of foreign currency. The American founders understood, as the great jurist Blackstone had said, that the "coining of money is in all states the act of the sovereign power". Under the Articles of Confederation, the states held with the central authority a concurrent power to coin money. The failure to give the national authority complete power in this area was deemed by many, as James Madison put it, "a material omission" in that early Constitution.

In the US Constitution ultimately ratified in 1788, this problem was addressed in two provisions. The first empowered the newly created Congress to exercise the power "to coin money, regulate the value thereof, and of foreign coin". At the same time, this new and strongly national document unambiguously prohibited such powers from being exercised by the several states: "No state shall ... coin money; emit bills of credit; make anything but gold and silver coin a tender in payment of debts." State sovereignty would never be the same.

The logic that had led to this was powerful and ultimately convincing. The great objectives sought by the confederation could not be achieved under its existing, decentralised forms of governance. There had to be something beyond the sum of the parts, and that had to be a true government with power sufficient to make the several constituent states abide by the decisions made at the national level. Part of the reason the early Americans moved in this direction was that the states had not conducted themselves well. There had been a plethora of noxious legislation at the state level, ranging from the abolition of debts to what the founders derided as the "rage for paper money". The result had been laws detrimental to the rights of property and of individuals. If the young commercial republic was to succeed and prosper, the old confederation simply had to give way.

Parallels are tricky, often appearing to be more apt than they are. But one cannot help noticing in the American experience traces of theoretical concerns that are much the same in the current debate over European monetary union and whether Britain should take part. On the one hand, it is not unreasonable to suggest that a single currency would greatly facilitate trade within a market that is truly common. But on the other hand, it is equally clear that the power to coin money is an essential part of sovereignty, and to cede so fundamental a power would indeed strike at the very heart of British independence. Those who doubt the soundness of a single currency for that reason may well find in the American experience lessons that suggest even greater caution.

This is because the deepest lesson to be drawn from America's founding debates goes beyond the particular concerns such as the power to coin money. What the creation of the American republic shows is that confederations rarely work. The most theoretically sophisticated of those early Americans was Madison, who prepared for the Constitutional Convention by steeping himself in the histories of previous confederacies. His conclusion was that the centrifugal pull of member states is almost always too strong, and that there was rarely to be found anything beyond the sum of the parts. The ultimate solution to the ills of the confederal form was to transcend it and move towards a more consolidated national government.

If Madison was right, if there is always a deficiency to be found in confederations, then the implications for the debate in Britain over a single currency are even more profound, because there will be a gradual movement towards greater integration at the expense of the sovereignty of the member nations. This will all be done in the name of expediency, arguing that such a movement is nothing more than the drawing of the implications of the original agreement. Such clear examples of the diminution of sovereignty as monetary union will, if undertaken, be looked back upon as the first step towards something very different from a mere confederation for purposes of trade.

Billy boy

PRESIDENT Clinton should have thought twice the other night before he went to see the musical *Chicago* at a New York theatre with his wife. Not only is the show of a raunchy nature, with plenty of bosomy showgirls and frolicksome dance routines, but one of the songs, delivered by doe-eyed beauties in garters and bustiers, runs "We want Billy — give us Billy!" At this, all eyes in the theatre turned to Clinton, who very obviously started to stroke Hillary's arm.

Moments later, a character on stage gave a line which talked about what women of dubious morals will "touch for a deuce". Someone at the back of the auditorium shouted "Paula Jones!" — the woman suing Clinton for alleged gross indecency some years ago — which caused a ripple of giggles. The President, fast becoming embarrassed, kissed Mrs Clinton on the head.

When it came to another line in the show which runs "whatever happened to pure ethics?", fellow audience members were in the desperate stages of laughter-control, stuffing hankies in their mouths, holding their noses against the pressure of rising

mirth, and dabbing tissues at tear-dampened eyes.

Even the chorus girls were having a hard time not copping. It may be some time before the Clintons risk another trip to a Broadway show.

Pre-election tension is mounting at Referendum Party headquarters in Horseferry Road, where the managing director, Malcolm Glenn, has confiscated



"To turn me Tory they'd have to marry off Ted Heath"

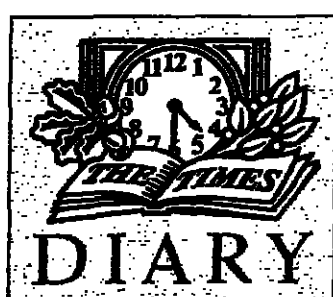
the staff-room television. It was meant to be used for watching the news, but Glenn snapped when he found his troops lounging around, gripped by a programme about the fathers of prostitutes.

Early fears

POLITICAL documentary-maker Michael Cockerell has a new hero. Preparing to lecture at the National Film Theatre tomorrow about politics and broadcasting over the century, Cockerell came across Cecil Hepworth, who arranged the first "kinematograph interviews" with leading politicians, back in the First World War.

In 1916, he was planning to film a meeting of Lloyd George's Cabinet, but when the story leaked out, his arrangements had to be cancelled. He wrote: "The Cabinet feared ridicule: how the people of a few years hence will laugh at the dignity which was afraid of being sullied by contact with the 'kinematograph'." Cockerell knows exactly what he meant.

There were sharp words yesterday when the Foreign Secretary met the Burmese Ambassador to London, U Win Aung. Malcolm Rifkind had been reluctant to meet a representative of the State Law and Order Restoration Council, the jingoistic anti-democratic military junta running Burma. "Good luck in your elections Mr Rifkind," said U Win Aung as he left. "And good luck in your elections," said Rifkind. "If you ever decide to hold them," U Win Aung, you lose some.



NUDE dancers brightened up the English National Opera's terrific new production of Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice* (at under an hour and a half it is ideal for those who regard opera as an inconvenience between drinks and dinner). Tastefully choreographed by the American Martha Clark, the dancers, who also perform clothed, strip off as Orpheus roves through the Elysian fields in search of his dead love.

Keep moving

Sadly, they declined to pose for publicity photographs. "They felt

it was one thing to dance naked for artistic reasons appropriate to the scene," explained a spokesman, "but quite another to do it for still photographs which might end up who knows where."

Seating plan

FOR all their dark reputation, the Tory whips have a soft, giving side, as they showed yesterday when they found some spare tickets for the party of Ben Chapman, the new Labour MP for Wirral South, who arrived to take his seat. Ten members of the family and friends came to see Chapman installed, and the Labour whips did not have enough tickets for them all to sit in the Strangers' Gallery. Labour's men approached Murdoch Maclean, the private secretary to Alastair Goodlad, the Tory chief whip, who rustled up two spare tickets, despite the drubbing Chapman gave the Conservatives last week. "We would have done the same," says an ungrateful Labour whip.

Yapping

ONE of Governor Chris Patten's two Norfolk terriers has had a close escape from Hong Kong's "Bowen Road dog poisoner". Writing in the *South China Morning*



Lavender with half a drink

Post, Patten's wife Lavender recounts how she was walking the dogs, Whisky and Soda, along a popular trail when Whisky snapped up a piece of chicken. It was later found to be soaked in an insecticide-style poison.

Whisky survived, writes Mrs Patten, but other pets have not been so lucky. She suggests owners muzzle their pets, urges passers-by to watch for any suspicious behaviour in the area, and concludes: "Who knows, one day a child may be affected."

P-H-S



JOHN AND BRIAN

The Tories need to become the party of one message

Another day, another relaunch. John Major's decision to face a phone-in programme on Radio 5 Live was doubtless designed to seize the initiative. As so often in the past, he offered a solid performance but was obliged to excuse the latest embarrassment caused by his colleagues. Stephen Dorrell's indiscretion has been read as a reflection of his own ambition to lead the Tories. If so, Mr Major should take some comfort: it means that the occupant of Number Ten is currently heading only the second most improbable campaign in British politics.

With, at most, eight weeks until election day arrives there are clear limits on what the Conservatives can do to alter their fate. The imprint of 18 years in power is not one that spin-doctors can eradicate. No seismic shift in the personality or leadership style of the Prime Minister can be credibly created. Nor, in truth, could policy positions be dramatically recrafted. Even on Europe and the single currency, where party strategists rightly yearn to take a much tougher line than the Chancellor will permit, a sudden change at this stage is extremely unlikely and would risk of insincerity if it came.

The Conservatives' best hope lies in linking their two strongest cards: the state of the economy and public uncertainty about new Labour. They can still argue that better times would be badly threatened by a change of government. Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, despite a prolonged and laudable effort on their part, have not yet convinced voters that the economy is safe in their hands. The same polls that show the Tories trailing by 20 points also reveal real fears of higher taxes, spending and interest rates if Labour win. The latest Conservative poster blitz — "Tony and Bill" — may be so crude as to undermine its own effectiveness. But it is located in the right territory.

If the coming contest is solely centred on the question of who can best protect the prosperity Britain has recently enjoyed, therein lies the Tories' one slim chance. Almost any discussion of different issues is a

distraction that will ultimately benefit Mr Blair. The whole Cabinet has to stick to that single script without deviation. Labour will doubtless claim with indignation that this constitutes the most negative approach in political history. All that matters for Mr Major is that it might be effective.

That message itself is more important than the messengers. Nevertheless, prospects would be improved if the Prime Minister stood squarely and publicly behind his party chairman. The purported election roles of Lord Cranborne, Sarah Hogg and Jonathan Hill has allowed, perhaps unfairly, an unflattering comparison with the famously factional 1987 campaign to develop. The position of Michael Heseltine as the main media frontman adds a further element of uncertainty. The 35-year-old William Hague would be better placed than the Deputy Prime Minister to dispute the Labour charge that it is time for a change.

Brian Mawhinney may well lack warmth and personal charm. But the staff he has selected at Smith Square are strikingly superior to those of five years ago. His party conference last year was an unexpected success. The "New Labour, New Danger" advertising effort may have been controversial, but it was also distinctive. Government performance, not party presentation, has been the problem that persistently handicaps the Conservatives. Mr Major has already been through three Central Office supremos in this Parliament. He should strive to reinforce the current one.

There is no point in Conservatives wishing for a campaign that will not happen. Like it or not, their record, leader, and core policies are all fixed. The search for some extra magic element will add only confusion and not clarity. Instead the party of One Nation needs to become the party of one message. Conservative Central Office has operated on that principle for some time. If ministers cannot, or will not, manage that, then they might as well go back to their constituencies and prepare for opposition.

ALBANIA'S PRESS

Freedom of speech must be restored — and fast

One of the most important indications that Sali Berisha was leading Albania towards a more open and democratic society was his tolerance of a pluralist press. And one of the most depressing aspects of his response to the turmoil now engulfing the country was his immediate censorship of all news media, the blackout in the transmission of satellite television pictures from Tirana and the ban on foreign journalists travelling outside the capital. The authoritarian response, learnt during 45 years of isolation and dictatorship, cast doubt on President Berisha's commitment to press freedom and pluralist democracy, which are the foundations of all the European political, military and economic organisations Albania aspires to join.

The immediate outcry in the West appears to have forced the Albanians to think again. The Foreign Ministry now says that the press restrictions, promulgated in the state of emergency, do not apply to foreign news organisations. Television pictures may again be broadcast from Albania. The heavy-handed turning back of journalists at police blocks on roads leading out of Tirana has been replaced with official "advice" that travel in the south was unsafe.

There has been no let-up, however, in the restrictions on local media. Indeed, the most sinister development has been the increasing intimidation, not only of the press but of all opposition activists. Behaving with the same ruthlessness that made Enver Hoxha's secret police among the most hated in any dictatorship, Shik plainclothes thugs have been threatening foreign and domestic journalists, smashing their cars and inciting

crowds to turn on those suspected of reporting the violence. Under the cover of darkness and curfew, Shik agents have set fire to newspaper buildings. No wonder more than half the population now listen to the BBC to try to find out what is going on.

The Albanian Government accuses foreign journalists of inciting violence. To impute such a motive betrays a feeble grasp of impartial reporting, a concept that had no meaning in Albania's postwar history and is, clearly, still deeply suspect, especially to Mr Berisha. It is not likely to become clearer to him now. Violence has fed on the attention it has drawn to the protesters' grievances, he must. Former Communists, opportunists and criminals have taken advantage of the popular anger, and copycat looting and burning has quickly led to anarchy. Ancient tribal enmities between the Tosks in the north, where Mr Berisha draws his support, and the Ghegs in the south, where Hoxha came from, are also now a factor.

Mr Berisha is still the elected leader, although his wooden, surreal re-election on Monday by parliamentary acclaim had all the pretence of an old-style dictatorship. The ultimatum to the rioters and armed gangs now roaming the south to hand over their weapons is justified, though hopes of restraint by the police and army are probably not. The cost of the upheaval is already incalculable, and Albania's stumbling attempts to escape grinding poverty will be set back years. Democracy is staggering in Europe's poorest country. If it is not to be stifled altogether, free voices must be restored to print and the airwaves.

MURDER MOST LITERARY

The Times helps to teach the tricks of a noble trade

It was a dark and stormy night: just as the oldest and best thrillers start. Nevertheless, last night hundreds turned out for a debate on the art of literary murder. They could easily have stayed at home beside the fire, snatching at the pages to find out how a down-and-out dossier came to starve to death in the wealthy architect's garage, although there was plenty of food within reach. Instead, they chose to brave the storms for *The Times*/Dillons forum on the subtle art of contemporary crime writing.

Why? Partly they represented the modern hunger for live and public entertainment instead of the broadcast and private kind. Some were attracted by the celebrity of the speakers. Colin Dexter is the eagle of the trade, broadcast far beyond the reading pub-trade, by his *Inspector Morse* on television. Minette Walters is the eagle, whose psychodrama about the case of the hungry tramp stands fourth on the bestseller list. But a number came to learn how to do the trick themselves. Write-it-yourself courses are now extremely popular, and a useful extra source of income for those who have proved publicly that they can write and, better still, get themselves published.

Ever since Sherlock Holmes, Englishmen have been born with a detective story fixed to their umbilical cords. Ever since Miss Marple, Englishwomen have been even better at the native genre. And crime writing should be easier to teach than other sorts. Much crime writing is formulaic. Readers

like it that way, as familiar as old slippers. They want their surprises in the plot, not in the manner or the mannerism of the writing.

One virtue of the detective story is that it is a comfortable solace, a sort of mental knitting where it does not matter much if you drop a stitch. The readers of a mystery story want to get to the end of it, to find out what happened to the dossier. The readers of a Dickens or Henry James story wish that it might never end. They read a Dickens or James story six times because they know it so well. They read a detective story six times because they can forget its ending six times.

Of course, crime writing comes in many covers, from the old-fashioned detective story, with a body in the garage and a solution, to the thud and blunder of American cops and the nightmare shores of Rendellian psychosis. But crime writing has to be professional and well-crafted. The field is crowded. The best thrillers perform the honourable old function of keeping the pages turning. The crime story is an extension of the fairytale and the older myth. It is melodrama so camouflaged as to create the illusion that the story being told, however improbable, could be true. Some tricks can be taught. Perhaps Minette Walters and Colin Dexter brought on some new talent last night. The new crime writers will also need lively imaginations and considerable skill with words, never forgetting the doggedness to apply bottom to chair until the daily quota is written.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

McAlpine memoir taken to task

From Baroness Falkender

Sir, May I comment upon the extract about myself from Alastair McAlpine's "knock-about" memoirs, which appears in *The Times* today.

At no time in 1979, or before or since, have I asked to see senior Tory advisers to offer them advice. I have never asked to see advisers to any political leader of any party to offer advice. That is not what happened.

I simply accepted an invitation from Lord Hanson to have drinks at the home of two of his closest friends and colleagues — who were my friends too. Political advisers often receive invitations in this way. Harold Wilson, for whom I was still working, strongly urged me to accept since he always hoped that more might be learned then and later about the background to the very nasty stories circulating at that time, culminating in the *Spycatcher* outpourings and continued to this day. On that particular occasion there were exchanges about those stories in particular as well as the political scene in general.

My views were in any case well known at the time. I was involved in a series of articles for the *London Evening News* during the election period, so what I thought was public knowledge.

The Labour Party did not refuse to pay my salary in 1974. They had never paid my salary at any time, either then, before, or after. They were never asked to do so, and had they offered the offer would have been refused.

It is no revelation that I "was very taken with the idea of having a woman prime minister". It was public knowledge at that time from articles, interviews, and elsewhere that I found the idea very interesting indeed. A large number of women, both in the Labour Party and elsewhere shared that interest. Indeed, more recently Mr Blair himself has gone further and expressed qualified admiration for Margaret Thatcher. In 1975, only two of Harold Wilson's immediate circle, namely Peter Shore and myself, had felt that it would be difficult if not impossible for Labour to win against a woman Prime Minister. We were right. And that was without the *Winter of Discontent* and a badly chosen election date.

As to my alleged "contempt... for the people who ran the Labour Party", referred to by Alastair, it was not "incredible". It was non-existent. I have often been saddened and disillusioned by the disloyalty and desertion in politics — on all sides — but contemptuous never, for that is a bitter and unhealthy characteristic and politics is a rough trade.

Alastair is a very intelligent, funny and gregarious fellow, with many friends and admirers, and it is always interesting and enjoyable to be in his company. I have known him since he first visited Downing Street during the 1974-76 period, when he even jokingly suggested, after meeting Harold Wilson, that he felt he, Alastair, ought to join Labour. But like us all, he has now in his dotage, unaware of the agendas of others, taken to living in his own private bubble where perhaps all is not exactly as he perceived it to be.

Yours sincerely,
MARCIA FALKENDER
3 Wyndham Mews,
Upper Montagu Street, W1.
March 3.

No joking matter

From Dr Iain Bowen Rees

Sir, In my days at school and university in England the Welsh were hero-worshipped for their superior state education, their classlessness, their progressive politics, their singing and their sport.

It strikes me that the derision described by Jan Morris (letter, *St David's Day*) dates largely from the time, some 18 years ago, when the Welsh voted against having their own elected assembly. A nation which lacks the backbone for a democratic form of its own is bound to become a laughing stock amongst jobs.

Later this year, we shall probably have an opportunity to redeem ourselves in another referendum. This time let us bear in mind that thousands of the English refugees who have managed to escape to a more community-minded Wales will be helping to stiffen our democratic resolve.

Yours faithfully,
IAN BOWEN REES.
Tal-Sarn, Llanllechid,
Bangor, Gwynedd.
March 2.

Joe Orton papers

From Mr John Nye

Sir, Have the Orton family considered photocopying the playwright's papers (Diary, March 19) Leicester and an American university might then both be able to benefit.

This thought first occurred to me at the time our library gave so much to the Churchill family for papers, the value of which to scholars is surely in the content.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN NYE
20 Court Road,
Lumbridge Wells, Kent.
March 3.

Politics of hope: personal liberty v traditional morality

From Professor David Conway

Sir, In the extracts which you published last week from his book, *The Politics of Hope* (February 22-25), Rabbi Jonathan Sacks contends that much of the sorry state of civic life in Britain today can be attributed to the displacement of traditional Judeo-Christian morality by the abstract secular individualism brought into prominence by the Enlightenment. A more secure and convivial social order, he argues, would follow the reinstatement of these values at the heart of public life and morality.

Not so, argues Rabbi David Goldberg (letter, February 27). The Judeo-Christian tradition was hardly an all-embracing value system. Its ideal form of government was a theocracy. Principles we take for granted, like democracy, freedom of belief, equality of the sexes, are a result of the Enlightenment, not the Judeo-Christian tradition.

One can understand such an objection being advanced by a secularist. When voiced by someone professing to stand within the tradition, they are truly astonishing. How can any self-professed Jew or Christian, let alone a rabbi (however liberal), take exception to theocracy as a political ideal?

Every week on the Sabbath, when putting away the scrolls of the Pentateuch after reading from them their weekly portion, Jews throughout the world call upon God to "return unto the ten thousands of the thousands of Israel" and "renew our days as of old". What is this but a plea for God to send his promised messiah, or anointed, to restore the Israelite theocracy and thereby usher in an age of everlasting peace and justice?

Yours sincerely,
DAVID CONWAY
(Head of School of Philosophy and Religious Studies),
Middlesex University,
White Hart Lane, N17.
March 3.

From Mr David Selbourne

Sir, Simon Jenkins ("Dr Sacks's road to Salem", March 1) accuses the Chief Rabbi of "moral hysteria" for his observations on our civic condition. Yet he himself employs the most fevered of images and the most violent of terms with which to denounce Dr Sacks for his (rather anodyne) moral proposals.

For all Jenkins's bluster, no civic order can rest upon a notion of liberty which, in the name of protecting

"democracy" from "moral totalitarianism", offers little more than a beggar-my-neighbour ideal of personal self-realisation through unimpeded freedom of action.

We certainly do not want the peddling of vacuous moral politics in personal crusades and the rest of it, which have more to do with self-promotion and the search for honour than any worthy motive. But we equally do not want the amorality which suggests that every general moral principle is, almost by definition, "authoritarian" and the individual who espouses it a "fundamentalist" or "totalitarian".

By Jenkins's route we come not to witches' trials in Salem but to that state of nature described by Hobbes in which "every man has a right to all things [and] to do whatever he listeth to whom he listeth". We cannot have a moral free-for-all, disguised as "freedom", and a civic society together.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID SELBOURNE,
United Oxford & Cambridge
University Club,
71 Pall Mall, SW1.
March 2.

From Mr Nicolas Walter

Sir, Jonathan Sacks's "politics of hope" is full of good intentions but also full of bad arguments. As Simon Jenkins points out today, virtually all his factual and theoretical claims are open to obvious objections.

It is especially futile to attempt the rehabilitation of the Judeo-Christian tradition, when its origins are so dubious and its effects so ambiguous, and when so many of our most precious values (humanity, rationality and fraternity; reciprocity, democracy and solidarity) arose before or outside or after it.

It is also ultimately fatuous to devalue the Enlightenment and secular humanism, when they share so many of Jonathan Sacks's own aims and provide so much surer bases for them. As he said himself (February 21) he worked with Hugo Gryn in spite of rather than because of their religion, "for the sake of their common humanity". That is our best hope.

Yours etc,
NICOLAS WALTER,
Rationalist Press Association,
88 Islington High Street, N1.
March 1.

A ban on Burma

From the General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, and others

Sir, According to the British Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, discussions at the Asia-Europe ministerial meeting in Singapore on February 15 "reflected the seriousness" of the deteriorating human-rights situation in Burma.

Why then does the international community, the EU included, fail to take even limited punitive action against Burma's ruling military dictatorship?

Burma looks set to enjoy a welcome into the Association of South East Asian Nations this year, whilst the EU appears to be dragging its heels over the Commission's recommendation on December 18 that it withdraw preferential market access for Burmese industrial goods because of Burma's

systematic use of forced labour, including child labour.

Approval of the proposal by EU foreign ministers was expected at the General Affairs Council meeting on February 24. The vote has now been postponed until March 24 at the earliest.

Withdrawal of trade privileges is a vital first step, for which there can be no acceptable delay. We urge the EU to send this clear message to Burma's ruling generals on the need for urgent reform.

Yours truly,
BILL JORDAN
(General Secretary, ICFTU),
GLENYS KINNOCK,
DENIS MACSHANE,
YVETTE MAHON
(Co-ordinator),
The Burma Action Group UK,
Collins Studios,
Collins Yard, Islington Green, N1.
February 26.

Financing litigation

From Mr Rhory Robertson

Sir, Anthony Scrivener's condemnation in the *Daily Mail* for labelling three young men as the murderers of Stephen Lawrence (Law, February 25) concludes with the interesting but unlawful proposition that if newspapers are really concerned with justice they should assist the relatives of the murder victim to start civil proceedings for damages.

It is still part of our common law that, save in exceptional circumstances, a third party may not give financial assistance to a litigant where that party has no legitimate interest in the proceedings. It would be hard, if not impossible, for a newspaper to claim that financing civil proceedings on behalf of the Lawrence family amounted to a legitimate interest.

Litigation for most of us is very expensive. It is beyond the means of

many people who do not qualify for legal aid, leaving a huge number of people who are denied access to justice.

The Law Society has not conducted research on these disenfranchised litigants. It should do so. Surely today there are no good reasons why a litigant is prevented from coming to an arrangement with a third party to assist in the financing of litigation. Indeed many of us are in favour of promoting a scheme whereby the investor takes a share of the damages. If all parties are properly and independently advised, why shouldn't this be allowed? It would at least give an opportunity of justice to those who presently cannot afford it.

Yours sincerely,
RHORY ROBERTSON
(Solicitor),
Sweepstone Walsh,
9 Lincoln's Inn Fields, WC2.
February 28.

Televised theatre

From the Head of the Theatre Museum

Sir, The recording of live theatre performances for broadcast on television, either in front of an audience or in a studio, is an issue raised in two recent articles: James Christopher's "Performing small miracles" (*Arts*, February 24) and today's excellent interview with Sam Mendes by Valerie Grove.

Valerie Grove also referred to recordings made in the US for posterity (actually for the Theatre on Film & Tape at the New York Public Library, not for the Museum of Modern Art). Britain's National Video Archive of Stage Performance, established by the Theatre Museum in 1993, has a similar aim of preserving the best of drama, dance and opera and has already recorded over 60 productions for research and educational use.

James Christopher, on watching the BBC2's *Company*, taped at the Don-

mar, feels that recording theatre for television "merely reminds you how artificial theatre is". This may be because he was watching a hybrid creature — recorded over two nights in front of an invited audience, using six cameras and radio microphones. However, we believe that by using acoustic microphones and fewer cameras concealed among an audience, visible, audible and whose response clearly affects the pace and intensity of a performance — the Theatre Museum more authentically reflects the original theatrical event. Of course, we are not recording for television.

Yours faithfully,
MARGARET BENTON,
Head, Theatre Museum,
10 Tavistock Street, WC2.
February 28.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.

From the Chancellor of Lincoln Cathedral

Sir, Simon Jenkins's polemic against Dr Sacks polarises where there is no need. The Chief Rabbi's commitment to the power of social and religious institutions need not be at odds with democracy: nor need Simon Jenkins's concern for individual freedoms be at odds with the renewal of those institutions and communities.

Caricatures of the Enlightenment usually lie behind such false alternatives. The authority it gave to individual moral reasoning is either pilloried as the precursor to all modern ills of moral anarchy and social fragmentation — or else it is lauded as the great liberator from social and religious oppression.

The debate also feeds on the fear these false polarities evoke. We are either heading inexorably towards total post-modern disintegration — or we are being pulled back to some form of social, moral or even religious authoritarianism.

There is no doubt the debate itself is important, and I trust *The Times* will keep it high on its agenda. But we must keep our balance within it. We badly need a renewal of our Judeo-Christian moral and social inheritance: but we also need its interaction with the best fruits of the Enlightenment legacy.

Our current social and political malaise is serious enough to merit sharp judgement. But false polemic merely makes matters worse.

Yours faithfully,
VERNON WHITE,
Chancellor of Lincoln Cathedral,
The Chancery,
11 Minister Yard, Lincoln.
March 3.

From Ms Judith Da Fano

Sir, In the interest of making life more liberal, perhaps Dr David Goldberg, Senior Rabbi of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue (letter, February 27), could try to do a very small thing which might produce a great change for Jewish women: stop men thanking God every day in their prayers that they are born men.

Yours faithfully,
JUDITH DA FANO
(Grand-daughter of a former Chief Rabbi of Milan),
Laburnum House, Main Street,
Milnthorpe, Cumbria.
February 27.

Bishop's moves

From the Reverend Andrew de Berry

Sir, Is it not ironic that the day after the Bishop of Birmingham publicly urged a black woman priest, the Reverend Eve Pitts, to quit her post as vicar, he announces his engagement to be married to a divorcee (reports, March 3 and 4)?

In choosing to marry a divorcee the bishop is involving himself in an action which, were he contemplating entering the Church as an ordinand, would until recently have debarred him from admission to holy orders. Yet he requests the resignation of Mrs Pitts, despite having acknowledged her as "a talented pastor".

Yours respectfully,
ANDREW DE BERRY,
The Vicarage,
Southwell Road,
Thurgarton, Nottinghamshire.
March 4.

Flying tackle

From Mr William Wright

Sir, The Reverend Julian Sullivan offers the peregrine as a more suitable bird name for Asda's rival to the Penguin biscuit (letter, March 3).

I feel sure that Penguin's lawyers would feel that the cuckoo's behaviour make it a far more appropriate beast.

Yours faithfully,
BILL WRIGHT,
5 Annington Road, East Finchley, N2.
March 3.

Fighting days

From Mr Patrick Howarth

Sir, It was a brilliant journalistic coup on your part to report yesterday the fight between two Eton boys, which was conducted over 60 rounds and lasted two hours while the contestants and the many Etonians who watched them drank large quantities of brandy, the proceedings ending only when the smaller of the two contestants, aged 15, dropped down dead.

It was no less of a coup to report the events which took place at the same time, when a Harrow tradesman sought protection from magistrates from 150 boys of Harrow School, who had already demolished part of his home and threatened to murder him and his son because he had complained to the headmaster.

It is true that these happenings occurred 172 years ago, but ought you to have tucked them away in small print under the heading "On This Day"? Ought they not to have been given suitable prominence alongside the latest pronouncement on law and order by Mr Michael Howard or his Dolly-like clone, Mr Jack Straw?

Yours faithfully,
PATRICK HOWARTH,
Flat 2, Pencarrow,
The Avenue, Sherborne, Dorset.
March 4.

COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
March 4: The Queen held an investiture at Buckingham Palace this morning.

The Rt Hon John Major MP (Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury) had an audience of Her Majesty this evening.

The Lady Susan Hussey has succeeded the Hon. Mary Morrison as Lady in Waiting to the Queen.

March 4: The Prince Edward, Trustee, this morning held a Meeting of the Trustees' Working Committee of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award International Foundation at Buckingham Palace.

March 4: The Princess Royal, President, British Knitting and Clothing Export Council, this morning visited Simon Carter, Quadrant Arcade, Regent Street, London W1.

Her Royal Highness, President, Animal Health Trust, this afternoon attended a Corporate Fellowship Scheme Luncheon at Buckingham Palace.

The Princess Royal, President, British Knitting and Clothing Export Council, later visited Rita Kariem, Devonshire Mews, London W4.

CLARENCE HOUSE
March 4: The Lady Angela Oswald has succeeded Mrs Michael Gordon-Lennox as Lady-in-Waiting to Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.

KENSINGTON PALACE
March 4: The Duchess of Gloucester, Patron, Parkinson's Disease Society, this morning visited the Headmistress of Upper Woburn Place, London WC1.

Her Royal Highness this evening attended a Reception in aid of Marriage Care at Drapers' Hall, Throgmorton Street, London EC2.

THATCHED HOUSE LODGE
March 4: Princess Alexandra this morning attended a Service Thanksgiving and Re-dedication for the Centenary of the King's Fund in St Martin-in-the-Fields Church, London WC2.

Today's royal engagements

The Princess Royal will open the new Edinburgh Healthcare Night Trusts Care of the Elderly unit at Ferryfield House, Edinburgh, at 11.00, and as Patron of the Moredun Foundation, will preside at the Reinal Lecture at Pentlands Science Park, Bush Loan, Penicuik, at 12.30. Later, as President of The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, will attend an English Symphony Orchestra concert by courtesy of Seven Trent at St James's Palace at 7.00.

The Duke of Kent, as President of the Automobile Association, will attend a committee meeting at Norfolk House, Basingstoke, at 9.00am.

Princess Alexandra, as Patron of Home-Start, will visit the Kingston scheme, 132 Kingston Road, New Malden, at 2.30.

Receptions

New College
Mr Michael Morris, Deputy Speaker, was the host at a reception held last night at the House of Commons on behalf of Dr S. Martin Gaskell, Director of New College, Northampton, and Chairman of the Standing Conference.

Young Musicians Symphony Orchestra
Mr Robin Hay, Chairman of the Young Musicians Symphony Orchestra, gave a reception last night at the Barbican Centre before the orchestra's 25th anniversary concert.

Lecture

Glaziers' Company
Ms Wendy Evans delivered the annual lecture of the Glaziers' Company last night at Glaziers' Hall. Later, Mr Malcolm Tosh, Master, accompanied by the Wardens, received livermen and their guests at a reception and supper.

Today's birthdays

The Hon David Astor, CH, 85; Lady Elizabeth Black, Extra Woman of the Bedchamber to Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, 89; the Right Rev Thomas Butler, Bishop of Leicester, 57; Admiral Sir Simon Cassels, 69; the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, 70.

Mr Jim Dowdy, MP, 46; Earl Grey, 88; Mr Anthony Hedges, composer, 66; Archbishop Bruno Heim, former Apostolic Pro-Nuncio, 80; Mr R.A.E. Herbert, former president, Royal Horticultural Society, 63; Mr Richard Hickox,

Premium Bonds

The following Premium Bond prize winners were announced yesterday:

£100,000: 62AZ 312752, winner has a holding of £19,971 and comes from Cumbria; 60GF 732578, £5,500, West Midlands; 12CX 863341, £20,000, West Yorkshire; 20VB 279333, £1,082, Surrey.

£50,000: 5QK 739151, £55, Nottinghamshire; 151K 860885, £10,000, Derbyshire; 5TP 922655, £7,651, Oxfordshire; 57FL 755552, £10,200, Buckinghamshire; 39VN 160728, £19,700, Southwark, south London; 62LK 625239, £17,890, East Sussex; 14YK 613008, £15,446, Lancashire; 38ZF 846455, £14,100, Warrickshire; 77WL 191937, £3,018, Hampshire.

£25,000: 24VP 420705, £11,045, West Midlands; 48DB 216071, £19,829, Hertfordshire; 34PS 534088, £19,999, Oxfordshire; 27EN 726175, £3,400, West Yorkshire; 32JW 524288, £20,000, Merion, London; 10AB 487554, £2,000, Ayr; 40QM 332751, £10,060, Gwent; 40NP 813728, £11,318, Surrey; 20TF 046436, £1,030, Staffordshire; 39LT 913275, £20,000, Dorset; 51QS 333830, £10,000, Staffordshire; 63LP 989457, £20,000, Hampshire; 26YB 742467, £2,223, Kent; 15NP 165265, £20,000, Camden, London; 25MF 383459, £20,000, Surrey; 36KL 249991, £12,650, Devon.

Luncheon

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
Mr Stephen Day, MP, and Mr Dennis Turner, MP, Joint Vice-Chairmen of the UK branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, were the hosts at a luncheon given by the executive committee at the House of Commons yesterday to welcome Commonwealth Parliamentarians attending the 1997 seminar at Westminster.

Vandals attack tomb that inspired phone box design

Masterpiece by Sir John Soane is desecrated

By DAVID ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A GEM of architectural design, the 1816 marble mausoleum of Sir John Soane, one of Britain's greatest architects, has been vandalised. Thieves entered the north London churchyard near St Pancras station, stole slender Ionic columns that were an integral part of the design and destroyed some of the original balustrading.

The mausoleum with its distinctive curved canopy supported on four Ionic columns is one of Soane's most ravishing designs. Such is its importance, it is believed to be one of only two Grade I listed tombs in London. Its distinctive shape is now well known as it inspired Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's original telephone box of the 1920s.

"It's a masterpiece," said Christopher Woodward, assistant curator of the Sir John Soane's Museum, which is based in the 1812 house that Soane designed and left to the nation at his death in 1837. He said that the stolen columns—each about a metre high—are not immediately identifiable as Soane's work and could therefore be sold relatively easily.

Soane's best known public commissions were the Bank of England, on which he worked between 1788 and 1833 but which was almost entirely rebuilt in the 1920s; additions to the Houses of Parliament and government offices on Whitehall, destroyed either by fire or the Victorians, who had different tastes; and the Dulwich Picture Gallery, survives.

For Soane, however, the mausoleum was a perfect vehicle for letting his Romantic imagination run wild: its lines did not have to be interrupted by any practical requirements such as plumbing or lighting.

Stefan Buzas, an architect and trustee of the Soane



Ionic inner columns have been stolen from the mausoleum; below, how it was

Monuments Trust, noted how little of Soane's public work has survived that the mausoleum is "all the more valuable". He said: "This is not vandalism. This is criminal theft. It's likely to have been stolen to order." The case shows how thieves are pinpointing churchyards.

Two years ago the Soane Monuments Trust raised £45,000 to repair the mausoleum. English Heritage was among those who responded to an appeal for help.

Julian Harrap, the architect who restored the monument, said: "It had been looking beautiful. This leads us to be even more disappointed that Soane's monument, which is intended to encapsulate his life after



death, should have been assaulted in this brutalising way. It's the destruction of the original fabric that is so distressing."

The Soane's Museum in

Lincoln's Inn Fields has 50 drawings in which Soane worked out the design, preparing it for his wife who died in 1815. Soane himself was buried there in 1837.

Dinners

Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain
Mr Ian Caldwell, President of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, was the chair at a dinner held last night at 1 Lambeth High Street. Baroness Robson of Kiddingall also spoke. Mr Gordon Oakes, MP, Sir John Hannan, MP, the President of the Royal College of Physicians, the President of the College of Optometrists, the President of the Institute of Health Service Management and the Chairman of NAAHT were among the guests.

Royal Society of St George
The High Commissioner for New Zealand was the guest of honour at a dinner of the Westminster branch of the Royal Society of St George held last night at New Zealand House. The Lord Mayor of Westminster, accompanied by the Lady Mayors, was the guest speaker. Vice-Admiral Sir James Weatherall, president, and Mr

Robert M Sewell, chairman, also spoke.

London Goodenough Trust
For Overseas Graduates, Lady French, Governor of the London Goodenough Trust for Overseas Graduates, and Mr John McCready, Deputy Director, received the guests at the annual Law Faculty dinner held last night at Mecklenburgh Square. Lord Goff of Chicheley, FBA, was the guest speaker.

RAF Club Dining Society
Mr Rupert Allason, MP, was the guest of honour at a dinner of the RAF Club Dining Society held at the club on Monday.

University news

Oxford
Professor Robert John Weston Evans, Fellow of Brasenose College, to be Regius Professor of Modern History in succession to Professor Sir John Elliott.

Inns of Court School of Law

1996-97 Bar Vocational Course
Early Resit: Pass List
In alphabetical order
Result: competent
H N Adams (G), M C A Hetherington (L), U Akram (L), C A Hetherington (L), W C Amako (L), M J Anderson (L), S L Ashcroft (L), J S Balfour (L), B S Banga (L), D M Best (L), J Boragie (L), M S Buckland (L), H B Caney (L), W A Cook (L), N J Cooper (L), M A Culling (L), F H Currie (L), R B Day (L), C L De Azavedo (L), J E Deane (L), C M Donnelly (L), T D Dooley (L), B S Duncan (L), P R Elliott (L), R K Farmer (L), D C Fountain (L), M R Freeman (L), E T Fung (L), J Gandolfi (L), M C Gilks (L), S G Goh (L), F Goldsbrough (L), D G Griffiths (L), S Hajj (L), T M Harrington (L), P A Harshwar (L), A Hazell (L), W M Heald (L), A M Healy (L), J R Hirst (L), L A Hussain (L), R K Inyundo (L), A A Jafar (L), F Karim (L), K Karim (L), 722-1514.

Conversion Course Candidate
Result: competent
O T Onafowokan (M).

E A Kerr (L), S J Kiroso (L), M Klein (L), N J Lane (L), Z V Lane-Smith (L), M E Lister (L), J Lister (L), J F Lennon (L), M K Lewis (L), A P MacLaren (L), I L Mackenzie (L), S P Maggs (L), A D Maitra (L), J T Maughan (L), A Meah (L), S J Midgley (L), D M Mills (L), J I Murray (L), H J Parry (L), T Pomeroy (L), M K Kanautia (L), J E Rayne (L), C J Rendell-Reynolds (L), L Rishi (L), P Saintjohn-Ralston (L), D S Sanders (L), J S Scott (L), S Shammugaguru (L), E B Simmons (L), M S Sinha (L), C D Sioh (L), D M Smith (L), H E Staley (L), A M Stone (L), P J Taggart (L), S S Thapa (L), J D Upton (L), J Vallejo (L), J C Van Den Broek (L), G D Warraby (L), C H Whitehead (L), C D Wood (L), A M Wooding (L), D Woodbridge (L), L J Yeats (L), P N Young (L), S Zaki (L).

Forthcoming marriages

Mr J.C.M. Atty and Miss F.F. Johnson
The engagement is announced between James, only son of the late Christopher Atty and of Janet Atty, of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, and Fiona, only daughter of Mrs Sheila Johnson, of Alcester Village, West Midlands.

Mr J.R.M. Boret and Miss S.J. Williamson
The engagement is announced between John, elder son of Mr H.F. Harwood and the late Mrs Mary Harwood, of Eton, Berkshire, and Samantha, only daughter of Mr Patrick Williamson, of Paphos, Cyprus, and Mrs Paula Williamson, of Dulwich, London.

Mr S.A. Bury and Miss C.W. Hancock
The engagement is announced between Stuart, son of Mrs Rosemary Bury, of Eton, Berkshire, and the late Mr Ian Burns, and Claire, daughter of Mr and Mrs John Hancock, of Offham, Kent.

Mr E.W.G. Collis and Miss E.L. Bhar
The engagement is announced between Edward, elder son of Mr and Mrs Robin Collis, of Plaistow, West Sussex, and Louise, daughter of Mr Harmanjit Bhar, of Lower Island, Virginia, and Mrs Caroline Bhar, of London.

Mr S.R.W. Davies and Miss C.E. Ashley
The engagement is announced between Stephen, son of Mr and Mrs W. Davies, of Fildesworth, West Sussex, and Christine, daughter of Mr R. Ashley and Mrs V. Jeans-Jakobsson, of Marlborough, Wiltshire.

Mr S.M.C. Dowdy and Miss R.E. Woods
The engagement is announced between Simon, son of Mr and Mrs M.C. Dowdy, of Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, and Rachel, eldest daughter of His Honour and Mrs Brian Woods, of Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

Mr H.C. Grindling and Miss C.A. Chapman
The engagement is announced between Harry, son of Mr and Mrs C.H. Grindling, of Hastings, East Sussex, and Christine, daughter of Mr and Mrs K.R. Chapman, of Madrid, Spain.

Mr W.J. Hague, MP, and Miss P.L.J. Jenkins
The engagement is announced between William, son of Mr and Mrs Nigel Hague, of Rotherham, Yorkshire, and Fiona, daughter of Mr and Mrs Emyr Jenkins, of Cardiff.

Mr J.F. Harwood and Miss S.J. Blackham
The engagement is announced between Jeremy, elder son of Dr H.F. Harwood and the late Mrs Harwood, of Carshalton, Surrey, and Sarah, only daughter of Mr S. Blackham and the late Mr S. Blackham, of Wimbledon, London.

Mr D.W.E. Johnston and Miss L.K. Astill
The engagement is announced between Dominic, elder son of Mrs Margaret Johnston, of St Albans, Hertfordshire, and Mr Keith Johnston, and Lucy, only daughter of the late Mr Timothy Preston Astill, OBE, LL.B., FRPharmS, and of Mrs Ingrid Astill, also of St Albans, Hertfordshire.

Mr E.P. Keams and Miss N.J. Morphet
The engagement is announced between Edmund, younger son of Dr J.L. and Dr B. Keams, of Ealing, London, and Natalie Jane, younger daughter of Mr David Morphet, of Leamington, Cornwall, and Mrs Ingrid Morphet, of Upper Norwood, London.

Mr S.D.W. Leather and Miss C.T. Barton
The engagement is announced between Simon David William, only son of Mr and Mrs M. Leather, of Langdon, Leicestershire, and Clare Theresa, daughter of the late Virginia Burton and of Mr and Mrs M.J. Burton, of Blackheath.

Mr S.J. Long and Mrs R.H. Bullock
The engagement is announced between Stuart Long, recently of Edinburgh, and Jane, widow of Richard Bullock, of Hawling, Gloucestershire.

Mr A.R. Vaughan-Martin and Miss F.J. Munro
The engagement is announced between Anthony, son of Mr and Mrs Frank Vaughan-Martin, of East Sussex, and Fiona, daughter of Dr and Mrs Donald Munro, of Basingstoke, Hampshire.

Water and Environmental Management

Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM) Diploma 1996
The pass list for the 21 successful candidates for the November 1996 diploma examination is as follows:
Alison Berry, Amanda Bird, Janet Bone, Philip Columbia, Isabelle Davasse, Albert Gilbert, Thomas Grady, Carl Harrop, Toni Holby, Philip Horrell, Jeffrey Izzard, James Hunter, Nicola Keegan, Susan Lewis, Colin Lindsay, Gerrard McCollum, Les Robinson, David Stewart, Jon Swift, Peter Wilders, Perry Woolner.

Latest wills

Dame Jean Lancaster, Director Woman's Royal Naval Service, 1961-64, of Blundell's, Macclesfield, left estate valued at £57,197 net.

She left £500 to both the WRNS Benevolent Trust and the Burwood International Fellowship.

Lady Hodson, of Dinder, Wells, Somerset, left estate valued at £13,959 net.

Ian Jockey Dickinson, of Riding Mill, Northumberland, left estate valued at £1,782,857 net.

Paviors' Company

The following have been installed officers for the ensuing year:
Master, Mr J.W.A. Clugston; Upper Warden, Mr J.H. Lelliott; Renter Warden, Mr P.D.M. Gell.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: David Bruce, David II, King of Scotland reigned 1329-71, Dunfermline, 1324; Gerhardus Mercator, cartographer, Rupelmonde, Belgium, 1512; William Cugnot, mathematician and pioneer of the slide rule, Eton, 1747; Antoine de la Motte Cadillac, explorer and founder of the city of Detroit, Les Laurents, France, 1658; William Henry Beveridge, 1st Baron Beveridge, economist, Rangpur, India, 1879.

DEATHS: Antonio Correggio, painter, Correggio, Italy, 1534; Thomas Arne, composer, London, 1768; Flora MacDonald, Jacobite, Skye, 1790; Franz Mesmer, physician and pioneer of hypnosis, Miesbach, Austria, 1815; Pierre Simon, Marquis de Laplace, astronomer, 1827; Count Alessandro Volta, physicist, Como, 1827; Sir Henry Rawlinson, orientalist, London, 1895; Edgar Allan Poe, poet and novelist, Philadelphia, 1849; Sergei Prokofiev, composer, Moscow, 1953; Joseph Stalin, Soviet leader, Moscow, 1953; Anna Akhmatova, poet, Moscow, 1966; Tito Gobbi, baritone, Rome, 1984.

British troops opened fire on a civilian crowd in Boston, Massachusetts, killing five people, in what was dubbed "The Boston Massacre", 1770.

Covent Garden Theatre was destroyed by fire, 1856.

The Nazis won almost half the seats in the German general elections, 1933.

The Spitfire made its first flight from Eastleigh aerodrome, Southampton, 1936.

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

TRADE: 0171 481 1982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

PERSONAL COLUMN

BIRTHS

SCHEIDTSMAN - On February 27th at The Portland Hospital (Mrs Scheidt) and Marc, a son, born 11.17.

DEATHS

BRIDGEWATER - Thornton Howard (Tony) on 28th February aged 88 years. He was a retired engineer and a keen sportsman. He was married to Mrs. Margaret Howard. He is survived by his wife, three sons, two daughters, and a large family. He was cremated on Monday 10th March at 11.30 am, followed by a private family service at 1.30 pm at St. John's Church, Brixton, London SW2. Burial in the family grave at St. John's Church, Brixton, London SW2.

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One regulator would stop crossed wires

Walk down the corridors of the Federal Communications Commission in Washington DC and find yourself staring into the open-door hearing room. A mini-courtroom drama is in progress — a bench of quasi-judges, apt audience, lawyers, all intent on the contest of the day: cable rates, radio and television licences, satellite broadcasts, dial-a-porn telephone lines.

Strong voices in Britain are calling for a counterpart to what the United States gave itself in 1934: a single agency to regulate telecommunications and broadcasting together. If Britain had an FCC, or Ofcom, as some would call it, our overlapping tangle of regulators could be eliminated. Ofcom, the independent Television Commission, the Radio Authority, the Broadcasting Standards Council (soon to be renamed commission), the radio branch of the Department of Trade and Industry — maybe even the

larger clusters. But the FCC still prides itself on some success in preventing excessive cross-media ownership.

Hundt, a communications lawyer, thinks the excitement about the entrance of The News Corporation (parent company of The Times) and Echo into domestic satellite television distribution was premature. "We still have to look at it," he says. The hopes of offering 500 channels by satellite, including local television, cuts across an FCC rule that no satellite service may broadcast local programmes into areas where these are available on cable or rooftop aerial.

As a Democrat, Hundt acknowledges that the marketplace approach does not serve all the television audience. His Republican predecessor, Mark Fowler, said memorably: "The public interest is the public's interest." In contrast, Reed points to children's television: "The marketplace will not serve kids because kids don't have any money."

Since January the FCC has imposed new rules to try to carry out Congress's mandate to improve children's television. US television stations must submit quarterly evidence of compliance. Yet any American attempt to regulate the content of what appears on TV inevitably runs up against the constitutional protection of free speech. Broadcasting, in this sense, is "speech". The only reason that it is not as free from regulation as the American press is that broadcasters need licences to use airwaves, a public resource. They therefore must submit to some governmental conditions in exchange for access to the air. But not many.

The FCC's new rules on children's programmes look pitifully weak. All they insist on is half an hour of a regularly scheduled programme of informational or educational content, to be shown between 7am and 10pm.

Can't the FCC take a more qualitative approach to raising standards? Hundt says no. All the commission can do is design numerical formulas and brandish the threat of removal of licence.

With technology moving so fast, the advantages of the FCC's approach are obvious. Yet it can do nothing to enliven the blandness of network television, spoilt by the frequency of commercial interruption and lack of variety. Last week when NBC showed *Schindler's List* without a commercial break, 63 million people watched it.

The inability to impose cultural values on broadcast television is one argument against a single British regulator for communications. The inevitability of the press being drawn into statutory regulation is another. But there is no excuse for not combining all other communications business under one official roof, especially if its technical sophistication is high and its doors are open.



BRENDA MADDOX

TV cooks up a storm

RARELY has the power of television been more clearly illustrated than in *Delia Smith's Red Nose Collection* programme last month, when she was joined by the comedian Dawn French to make chocolate muffins. The BBC2 show triggered a run on the mini-muffin baking tray featured.

In Sainsbury's stores throughout the land, the trays started selling like, well... hot cakes. A supply that should have lasted six months has already sold out. Customer service lines have been so busy with calls for the baking trays that the powers-that-be have had to rush an advance order from the only manufacturer. Remaining baking trays, meanwhile, are being rationed among the stores to avoid outbreaks from frustrated would-be muffin-makers.

Sugar and Spice

WORKING with the Spice Girls won't be a picnic for Jennifer Saunders, actress and mother of three



Dawn French and Delia Smith triggered a run

daughters aged between five and 11. As part of this month's Comic Relief TV extravaganza, Saunders formed a lookalike band, called the Sugar Lumps, with Dawn French, Kathy Burke, Lulu and Llewella Gideon. The two bands teamed up last month up to make the official Comic Relief single, *Who Do You Think You Are?*, the proceeds of which will go to the charity. Saunders says: "Despite all the amazing people I've worked with, working with the Spice Girls has finally earned me the respect of my children."

Judgment day

THE controversial former High Court judge James Pickles is to join News Bunnies and topless-darts players on Live TV, possibly Britain's least-viewed but best-known cable station. The judge is to star in *Trivial Pursuit*, a series of trials based on real-life cases. The series features cases from all over the country, such as the Dartmoor villagers trying to prevent a Thai massage salon from opening. The protagonists from each side will be invited to submit their case, and the judge will

deliver his learned verdict. Pickles, who retired from the bench in 1991, says: "even though our courts are open to the public, relatively few people will ever have attended a trial." Unfortunately for Pickles, even fewer people are ever likely to watch Live TV.

Launch fling

BIZARRE, the new magazine about the world of the weird, has run into trouble even before going on sale. The inaugural issue was pulped after an article was found to be in contempt of court. So yesterday the magazine — the latest title from John Brown Publishing, which produces *Viz* — relaunched itself.

To mark the affair, an octopus-throwing competition took place in Battersea Park, south London. The creatures were dead before the first tentacle was flung, but the event incurred the wrath of animal rights groups. The RSPCA says: "Because they were dead, there was no cruelty, so there was nothing we could do. But it is in very bad taste and might encourage people to behave inappropriately with animals."

Octopus-throwing is apparently big among Canadian ice hockey fans who hurt the ink creatures onto the rink when their team wins.

GOOD news for the playwright Alan Bennett who recently denounced *Classic FM* listeners as "Saga louts". *Saga*, the over-50s travel firm, which spends around £400,000 a year with *Classic*, has withdrawn all advertising from the station after it jacked up its rates.

Saga director Tim Bull said: "Advertising on *Classic* is no longer cost-effective."

Morley silenced

ONE CRITIC was conspicuous by his absence when colleagues of the late *Daily Mail* critic Jack Tinker trod the boards at the London Palladium to celebrate the writer's life.

Sheridan Morley, who reviews shows for *The Spectator* and the *International Herald Tribune*, has the imposing physique that could dominate a stage and a voice to hit the back rows of the Drury Lane. But he was not invited to take part. Could it be his application for Tinker's job was considered by some to follow rather too hard upon the diminutive scribe's death? Whatever the reason, Charles Osborne, who was formerly *The Daily Telegraph's* man in the stalls and who organised the tribute, says: "At the request of those close to Jack, it was decided not to ask Sheridan to take part."

Admen under fire

AS THE political temperature rises and a possible change of government looms, the Advertising Association has conducted a MORI survey of 100 anonymous MPs' views of the advertising industry and its work.

It seems that the industry still has serious image problems among more than 40 per cent of the Labour Party members surveyed. Among their objections are that advertising "does not work in the public interest", it "exploits markets", "distorts needs" and "misleads consumers".

One Labour backbencher even declares: "(Advertising) are guilty of telling more lies than politicians", while another says: "They are unscrupulous, ruthless, grasping and duplicitous."

The association has brushed off the findings. "The official Labour Party is extremely positive about us and does not endorse these worries," says Andrew Brown, the association's director-

ADVERTISING

general. "The point is not to be confused between individual, anonymous opinions and official policy."

DAVID OGILVY, the co-founder of Ogilvy & Mather, one of the world's top ten agencies, publishes an updated version of his 1978 autobiography on March 20.

The £16.99 hardback, published by John Wiley, tells his rags-to-riches life story, from childhood poverty and his early working years flogging Aga cookers to stuns in Scotland to his launching of the profitable O&M.

It also includes some revealing extras about the 35-year-old Ogilvy, who now lives in a 14th-century chateau in Bonnes, France. These include his favourite words (such as egregious, aubile and ragamuffin),

his favourite recipes (mushroom soup and honey ice-cream) and his favourite friends (the Duke of Edinburgh, Eleanor Roosevelt and a conspicuously small number of O&M colleagues).

ONE of the most memorable advertising jingles bites the dust from today, as Jacob's Bakery unveils a new campaign for Club biscuits minus its familiar signature tune.

The slogan "If you like a lot of chocolate on your biscuit join our Club" was created in 1982. Jacob's Bakery's new agency, Euro RSCG Wnek Gosper, has created a high-tech campaign which breaks tonight. Sources say it reflects the new "high-tech" Club biscuit, with 15 per cent more chocolate and an improved centre. Nothing is sacred, it seems.

BELINDA ARCHER



Jacob's Club: going high-tech

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High profile and dynamic private company seeks an individual, aged 24-26, to be trained by Sales Manager with a view to replacing him. Suit those with a proven track record in sales and marketing. Competitive salary and benefits. Please send CV to: PAUL SAMOYLS, 0171 436 0818.

MARKETING EXEC
£27K + FRP
Initial Management Comm req Mktg Exec - 2 yrs exp & CIM ess, excel career opp - Nicky FR AGY, 0171 287 3391.

SALES DIRECTOR

£35K London
Leading travel industry representation company seeks a dynamic, creative, sales-driven leader to join a small, highly specialised team. Founded 10 years ago, the company is dedicated to excellence in the sales and marketing of quality tourism products.

- 10 year travel industry sales experience as Director of Sales level.
- Experience working Asia Pacific region with "Sydney 2000" knowledge preferable.
- Computer literate, understanding of database and direct marketing.
- Ability to understand/travel with different cultures. Knowledge of Japanese and two European languages.
- Ability to work well with clients and to mix with individuals at all levels.
- Existing industry relationships in the outbound to Asia and Australasia market for leisure tourism and the Meetings and Incentive industry from Europe.

Please respond by post to: Clementia Cardoso Wise, Managing Director, Asia Sales & Marketing, 421A Finchley Road, London NW3 6HU.

GREATLINK

SALES
Greatlink Electronics, an international cable assembly company with offices in the USA, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, and the UK, is seeking a sales representative for the UK market.

1. CV submitted by email, with 10 years Sales and Marketing experience in the Cable industry, preferably O&M.
2. Manager of Sales with experience of Computer O&M and sales related responsibilities.
3. Sales Manager with O&M account management experience.
4. Subsequent with at least 2 years experience.
5. Sales Rep. Currently having business with computer industry for O&M.
6. Sales Assistant familiar with PC skills and accounting work.

THE APPLICANTS will:

- promote the selling cable assemblies to O&M in the computer and electronics industries.
- be able to demonstrate a successful sales track record to the electronics industry.

Please forward your CV with current and expected salary details to: Mr. Sam Li, 17 Priddy Way, Croydon, Surrey CR9 3AB. Tel: 01889 562419.

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David joined us 2 weeks ago. He's a bright guy but had no experience of selling advertising space. We trained him intensively for the first week and paid him. We will continue to pay him. In his second week David sold his first page of advertising for £4800. We paid him £720 and gave him some champagne. David is good but he isn't special. I employ 227 people like him, many of whom have been with us for years. If you want to be part of this success and live in London, then call me.

Carol England on 0171 915 9933/262 4832

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Call Stewart on 0171 713 1717 (Central London)

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We are one of the largest companies in the UK, specialising in the supply of security systems to legal practices and associated organisations.

Due to further expansion we are seeking an experienced Sales professional to work in the South East who can demonstrate a successful track record in selling security systems at a high level. You will need to show an ability to deal with partners in legal practices, which requires good presentation skills and a high degree of confidentiality.

The ideal candidate would be between the ages of 25-35, with experience of selling software solutions. We can promise a challenging yet interesting environment.

On target earnings would be approximately £20k, but we would expect the right candidate to earn somewhat more. Please send your CV, explaining why you think you would be the right candidate for the job to:

Linda Moore, Sales Administration, Avenue Legal Systems Limited, 1-2 Kingsdon Close, Kingsdon Business Park, Cogswold, Oxon, OX15 2JL.

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We are an innovative German mechanical engineering company in Baden Württemberg which manufactures electrical safety products. For the next years we expect a considerable growth in sales of our products on the British market. For this expansive development we are looking for a qualified

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Why the real battle will be fought on our screens

Two young and ambitious correspondents have their eyes on the BBC's top political post, says Michael Gove

The real battle in the coming election will not be between Major and Blair, nor even Portillo and Redwood, but Soper and Vine. Their names may be only hazily familiar but the faces and voices of BBC political correspondents Jon Soper and Jeremy Vine have insinuated themselves into the public consciousness and are likely to become more prominent as this interminable election campaign reaches its anti-climax.

The BBC's political team has already attracted the wrong sort of attention this week with an attack on the Corporation's alleged Blairite bias from Tory communications director Charles Lewington in *The Sunday Telegraph*. Both Soper and Vine might have been in Lewington's mind. The former has written an accessible and broadly sympathetic biography of the Labour leader, the latter is an energetic muscular Christian in the mould of Mr Blair. But, whatever affinities with the Labour leader either might have, the minds of these two consummate professionals during the election will not be directed towards promoting anyone other than themselves.

Both, like Tory leadership contenders, will be using the election campaign to position themselves for a job where no vacancy currently exists but whose holder is the victim of an unfair whispering campaign. The job they have their eye on is the most prestigious reporting post in broadcasting — political editor of the BBC. The incumbent, Robin Oakley, who used to fill the same post on this newspaper, enjoys the respect of colleagues in the parliamentary lobby for the range of his knowledge, quality of his prose, scrupulous professionalism and quiet authority.

Oakley inherited the herringbone mantle of political editor from John Cole. Cole is England's favourite Ulsterman and the voice of the nation turned to crisis, from Westland to the fall of Thatcher, to be informed of the latest peripatetic in a suitably authoritative fashion which still had bite — Reith with teeth. When Oakley replaced Cole, as another painstaking reporter with Fleet Street battle honours, he sought to emulate Cole's style.

But ever since Oakley arrived at the Beeb he has been, like Juninho at Middlesbrough, a classy player underappreciated by those around him. There was resentment among the corporation's older writers that the post of political editor had gone to someone whose background was in print, not broadcasting. Many Beeb insiders would have preferred Cole's dogged deputy, chief political corres-



Old and new: Britain's favourite Ulsterman John Cole (left) was replaced by Robin Oakley; inset (from top) Vine, Soper and Sergeant

pondent John Sergeant, to succeed. Some shows, such as *The World at One*, still prefer to have "Sarge" provide political commentary in his fireside tones. Oakley has proved an authoritative broadcaster but that has not quelled the critics. There are rumours that after the election elements within the BBC will try to ease Oakley out and the race is already on among his juniors to succeed him. Soper and Vine are the two most obvious contenders, notable for their ambition, ability and determination to develop a new style of political broadcasting.

The whispers against Oakley have been fomented by a BBC faction who feel that his calm, detached, rational style does not have the breathless appeal of his ITN opposite number, Michael Brunson.

While *News at Ten* has eased itself off the Olympian heights and into the middle market, Brunson has kept the

profile of politics high by adopting a more populist style. His formidable form, mackintosh against the wind, has become as permanent a fixture in the nightly bulletin as Big Ben. The ITN political editor has managed to carve a suitably large niche for himself with a willingness to preface his reports with a punchy: "In this leak I have just been handed, Trevor."

The direct style, coupled with some genuine exclusives, has impressed some BBC executives who believe politics needs to be dramatised to engage the 1990s audience.

Soper and Vine satisfy that appetite. Presenters as much as reporters, with Soper a regular on PM and Vine on *Five Live*, they have cultivated their own personalities as assiduously as lobby contacts.

They tread subtly different populist paths. Vine has made imaginative use of broadcast resources to grab the audi-

ence's attention. One radio report which has been raised to mythic status began with the sound of blades being whetted in a kebab shop and after a few seconds of blood-chilling effects Vine's voice broke in to the effect that "The knives being sharpened here in Stavros's Grill are as nothing to those being unsheathed in Central Office..." Vine's reports delight in arresting metaphors, visual and audio.

Soper's style is more matter, less art. He has thrust himself to the attention of BBC executives with an aggressive approach to story-getting which has unsettled more traditional political journalists. He has acquired a reputation as one of the most lethal lunchers in the lobby. Recently, Soper entertained the Chancellor in the three Michelin star splendour of Nicos at Ninety. A day later, on *The*

World at One, a detailed and explosive sketch of Clarke's mind was broadcast. The quotations attributed to those close to Clarke could not have been more clearly from the horse's mouth.

If there was any doubt as to Soper's source, the presence of Shadow Environment Secretary Frank Dobson in the same restaurant that lunchtime ensured that the truth would out. Soper's rush to the studio with his scoop, and the ease with which the source was uncovered, distressed old lobby hands who guard the identity of their informants more closely than the Stasi. Soper's coup, however, earned him the admiration of executives in the Beeb.

For those who want a change at the top there was jolting on the *Cheer Nicos* cake — Frank Dobson's lunch partner was Robin Oakley. The BBC political editor was scooped by his junior.

Oakley's future will prove a pointer to the BBC's future direction — he is a canary in the corporation corridors. If he survives then so will a commitment to traditional political reporting. If he is eased aside, a more assertive tone will replace the measured cadences on which the nation has come to rely.

When truth is bound to hurt people

Fact spells friction when it comes to docudramas, says Patricia Holland

Undoubtedly, if a drama on television or in the cinema is preceded by the caption "this is a true story", viewers will gather in greater numbers and with a heightened eagerness. If *No Child of Mine*, the docudrama of a young girl abused by her family and the care system, had been a fictional film on Four, it would hardly have whipped its critics into such a passionate frenzy as we saw in the press last week.

It's OK to imagine the dreadful things that undoubtedly happen occasionally. It's quite different to document them in a drama. This was confirmed by the director, Peter Kosminsky, bruised by the hostile reaction to his film, in a debate on docudramas hosted by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts on Monday. Since the BBC

field QC, who has been closely involved in exposing miscarriages of justice, the detail is less important in such dramas than the expression of a truth that is unpalatable to the authorities. "We live in a society where vision and principle have evaporated, and we need people with courage who will produce this sort of film."

For him, *In the Name of the Father* has an inner truth. This is the truth of commitment, for these are all dramas with a conscience. They set out to right wrongs, to expose the reality of a situation, to express a passionate partisanship — what the best of television has done in memorable programmes from *Cathy Come Home* through to *Who Bombed Birmingham* and *Why Lockerbie*.

And yet... If events are changed and chronologies shifted for dramatic effect, if some events are overlooked and others amalgamated, an unsympathetic critic may point out that the bigger assertions will lose credibility. Any departure from the facts is the beginning of a

very slippery slope. Cinema offers greater scope for this. For instance, *In the Name of the Father* would have run into problems on television, where lawyers have the final say on a programme's content. David Aukin, C4's head of drama, described how "dictates come down from offices I don't normally speak to" for a drama which is based on fact, such as the upcoming *Welcome to Sarajevo*, which deals with the experiences of reporter Michael Nicholson and his bid to rescue a child from the besieged city.

The Hillsborough team felt that the involvement of lawyers was no bad thing. The checking and rechecking meant that the victims' families could be sure that the programme represented their views.

They said: "We didn't change anything for artistic reasons, and we didn't get too precious about our art. It is possible to make a programme which is true to the facts and still maintain your dramatic integrity."

'We need people with courage to produce such films'



Biting the hand that feeds them

As the Saturday and Sunday newspapers demonstrate, it is no longer considered un-English to show an interest in food. When *The Times* joined with restaurants last year to offer lunch for a fiver, more than 40,000 readers responded. So serious newspapers can no longer afford to be without star restaurant critics who eat for England and their editors.

As A A Gill, who manages to eat out and watch television for a living with *The Sunday Times*, puts it: "I eat foie gras to put bread on the family table." The newest recruit to the ranks, who does not have the same worries as A A Gill, is the newly ennobled Lord Lloyd-Webber, who writes about the restaurants he visits in *The Daily Telegraph* on Saturdays.

So when novelist Will Self, restaurant critic of *The Observer*, bowed out last Sunday, he was given star billing on the front page of the Review. He solved the problem of how to end it all by eating two lunches on the same day, one at McDonald's on London's King's Road, the other at Pierre Koffmann's La Tante Claire, one of London's three Michelin three-star res-

taurants. There are several sorts of restaurant critic. Some seek simply to show off their wit and cleverness, some seek to inform, and some manage to do both. Self was becoming one of them. As he munched manfully through his hamburger at McDonald's, followed by a lobster bisque and cote de boeuf sauce vigneronne at Tante Claire, he couldn't resist adding Proustian touches.

His companion was surprised to find his nuggets tasting of chicken at all, even if the flavour, according to Self, was effectively a reminiscence, a kind of "Ou sont les nuggets d'Antan?" experience. His bisque was so thick and creamy it looked more like the surface of Neptune than a soup. As his two lunches ended, he picked at the smallest maddening he had ever seen — "à la recherche du millésime perdu". The meal cost £194.20.

There are some jobs in journalism which arouse universal envy. Television and theatre critics get used to being told what cushy jobs they have. So do restaurant critics and travel editors. And yes, eating out, watching plays or travelling to the

PAPER ROUND

Brian MacArthur



Caribbean are fun — but the writing is neither easy nor fun. Delivering a thousand words overnight is hard work and if the words aren't witty or full of useful information a writer will soon be fired.

After years of writing the restaurant column in *The Spectator*, Nigel Lawson found that eating out was no longer a treat. Her palate had become so jaded that she took a six-month sabbatical. Her successor, David Fingleton, takes notes as he eats and asks for the menu when he leaves.

Last week he investigated Marco Pierre White's three latest London restaurants. He was uncovered by White as he made his notes and was offered a free drink after the meal. It made no difference to his verdicts. At the Criterion, the £89.49 bill seemed "excessive" for "unremarkable" cooking; at Quo Vadis in Soho the wines were "ludicrously

over-priced" and the bill of £109.41 "outrageous".

Marco Pierre White's reputation is now so high — Gill rates him as the best cook in Britain — that Fingleton's verdict may not affect his bookings. But restaurant critics undoubtedly have power to make or break restaurants. A rare review from any one critic — Jonathan Meades in *The Times*, Fay Maschler in the *Evening Standard*, Lloyd-Webber in the *Telegraph*, Fingleton in the *Spectator* or Gill in *The Sunday Times* — delivers a packed restaurant.

The critics themselves are more modest about their power. Meades, certainly outside London, is that it is unlikely that a damning review can close a restaurant. Gill thinks that word of mouth is the most important ingredient in a restaurant's success — though

that can be swelled by a rare review in a newspaper.

Meades, who is a pretty good cook himself, is more worried that restaurant critics should know about their food and how to cook. Editors would not tolerate a music critic who knew nothing about music. So they should not tolerate restaurant critics who don't know the difference between a *beurre blanc* and a *hollandaise*.

Meades is glad that writers rather than food buffs are writing restaurant reviews but detects a danger that as restaurant critics become star turns, writers will be employed simply to entertain. The job, however, is to inform as well as entertain. "Purely to entertain is insulting to the reader and the chef."

That criticism cannot be applied to the doyenne of the trade, Fay Maschler, who has been a critic of London restaurants for more than 20 years. Her star rating has been recognised by a succession of editors, including her present editor, Max Hastings. "Food has become an increasingly important part of journalism," he says. "Fay has a huge following and what she says is taken seriously."



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WEDNESDAY MARCH 5 1997

Halifax cash pile points to second payout

BY GAVIN LUMSDEN

HALIFAX Building Society, which converts to a bank in June, is awash with cash and needs to dispense with more than £3 billion of surplus capital reserves, it revealed yesterday.

Even before it floats the society is considering opening the coffers to its 8.5 million new shareholders, either via a special dividend or a share buyback programme.

Announcing Halifax's annual results yesterday, Roger Boyes, group finance director, said the society's capital structure was inappropriate for its future. He said: "The money is broadly invested in the money markets where it is not getting a huge return. The task of the

board is to enhance the returns on the money. We cannot rule out returning capital to shareholders. The alternative is to find new ways, either through acquisitions or by investing in organic growth and our existing businesses."

Halifax has built up £6.87 billion of capital reserves, giving it a tier 1 ratio of 14 per cent, double that of most banks and three times the level required by the Bank of England. Although it has declined to enter the fray for Scottish Amicable, Halifax could fund bids for companies as diverse as Northern Rock, Allied Irish, Friends Provident, Perpetual and Mercury Asset Management.

Gren Folwell, deputy chief executive, said that he would introduce a loyalty scheme to ensure an even higher level of support from private shareholders than at Abbey National, which has retained a 45 per cent retail shareholder base since its conversion.

The prospect of a further windfall could tempt a high number of Halifax members to hang on to their shares, barring the entry of institutional investors, such as tracker funds, into the FT-SE 100-listed stock.

Ian Morley, head of derivatives at John Govett, said that illiquidity in Halifax shares would cause some tracking error but that holders would sell shares eventually thereby easing the situation.

Analysts raised concerns about the company's direction as it revealed a modest 6.6 per cent rise in pre-tax profits, to £1.43 billion. Despite spending

£626 million on discounts and cash incentives Halifax saw its share of net new mortgage lending slipped to 11 per cent (£2 billion), compared with its 20 per cent stake of all mortgage stock.

Halifax said that in the first half it had withdrawn from the intensely competitive re-mortgaging market. In total it made 210,000 loans, including 70,000 to first-time buyers, with 70 per cent of loans on an interest-only basis backed by endowments or Peps.

Similarly, its share of new liquid savings was 7 per cent (£2.4 billion), well off its 16 per cent presence in personal sector liquid assets.

However, personal loans grew £182 million to £1.09 billion. Profits were also hit by the additional £298 million costs of merging with the Leeds Building Society and conversion expenses, which had reached £153 million.

Jon Foulds, chairman, said the results showed Halifax was en route to being the UK's leading provider of personal financial services.

However, one analyst said Halifax should reduce diversification and refocus on the core mortgage and lending businesses. "With the right capital structure Halifax is saying it could make a capital return of 25 per cent on its core markets. If so, it would do better to concentrate here, although it will probably have to make acquisitions and offer something to shareholders to mop up the excessively high level of reserves."

Pennington, page 27

Pledge by Honda on British operations

BY OLIVER AUGUST

HONDA, the Japanese automobile group, has rejected recent criticism of the British Government by other foreign investors and said it will keep its UK operations even if Britain opts out of the European single currency.

Kentaro Kato, the European executive vice-president in charge of manufacturing, said: "We operate in many countries, which means in every part of the world we try to avoid currency fluctuations. Therefore, there is no intention to change investment strategy if they join or not."

He emphasised that overall manufacturing costs were not particularly high in Europe. Higher than average costs at the Swindon plant were due to the fact that the plant had not been fully written down rather than currency problems. "The comparative costs are at a slight disadvantage because it's new," Mr Kato said.

Senior executives at Siemens, Unilever and Toyota have recently given warnings of the adverse consequences of staying out of monetary union because damaging currency fluctuations could increase in Britain while they would decrease in Europe.

Mr Kato said that Honda's sales in Europe were growing strongly after the company sold 200,000 cars in 1996. Its Civic and Accord models are mainly responsible for the sales rise.

Power firms face £1.5bn pension bill

BY GAVIN LUMSDEN

POWER COMPANIES face a £1.5 billion bill if a landmark decision by the Pensions Ombudsman is upheld, according to a union representing 30,000 electricity workers. This is a third higher than previous estimates and could thwart Labour's plans for a windfall tax on the industry and endanger thousands of jobs.

Julian Farrand, the ombudsman, last month ordered National Grid to repay £46.3 million of surpluses that it took from the Electricity Supply Pension Scheme in 1992. The company is expected this week to launch an appeal in the High Court against David Laws and Reg Mayes, former employees who complained to Dr Farrand.

Trustees of the National Grid pension fund met on Monday and are also expected to appeal against the ombuds-

man's verdict of "innocent maladministration".

However, Tony Cooper, general secretary of the Engineers and Managers Association, to which Mr Laws and Mr Mayes belong, expressed regret that the cases had been brought.

Refunding Mr Cooper's estimate of £1.5 billion would take most of the electricity pension funds over Inland Revenue limits on pension benefits. The result would be either losing the surpluses or their tax status, he said. Forcing power companies to pay back the money would cost jobs and encourage them to switch from final salary schemes to less-generous money purchase plans. If the court overturned Dr Farrand's decision, it would probably confer full control of pension surpluses on the companies. "We are in a no-win situation," he said.

Dollar rally lifts shares to record

BY JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

A RALLYING dollar helped London and several other European stock markets to record highs yesterday, and also helped to push sterling to its highest level against the mark for 53 months.

The FT-SE 100 index closed 50.6 points higher, at 4,357.7, just above the record set on February 19. The pound's effective index jumped to a close of 98.5 from Monday's finish at 98.0, rising two pennies to DM2.7688 during the session. The dollar hit a peak of DM1.718, its best level for 54 months.

German shares also profited from dollar strength, which should encourage exporters. In Frankfurt, the DAX index closed in fresh territory above 3,300 points, boosted particularly by a rally in car shares.

The dollar is profiting part-

ly from the view that the American economy may be strengthening and that the argument for higher US interest rates is becoming more compelling. Yesterday's American economic statistics supported this view, with sales of new homes in January jumping to the highest level for nearly 11 years.

In addition, the Conference Board, a leading business research group, said its index of leading indicators designed to forecast economic activity six to nine months ahead, jumped 0.3 per cent in January, its biggest increase for eight months. This added to Monday's survey by American purchasing managers, which showed that manufacturing activity had accelerated in February.

Markets, page 28

Bid battle likely for Littlewoods store chain

BY JON ASHWORTH

ANALYSTS predicted a bidding scramble after Littlewoods, the pools-to-retailing group, confirmed it has put its 135-strong chain of stores up for sale. Asda and Tesco were immediately tipped as front-runners for the outlets, which are expected to fetch £500 million or more.

The move, which follows a long period of turbulence at Britain's biggest private company, would allow Littlewoods to focus on its home shopping interests. Earlier this year the company, which is controlled by descendants of Sir John Moores, announced plans to buy Freemans from Sears for £395 million. The deal is under review by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Details emerged as Littlewoods announced interim pre-tax profits of £112.1 million (£97.3 million) in the year to December 31. Group retail sales rose 8.5 per cent to £1.8 billion, but the impact of the National Lottery left overall sales 1.3 per cent lower at £2.3 billion. The leisure division saw turnover tumble to £459 million (£631 million). Littlewoods has changed its year end, and the results for the 16 months to April 1997 will be published in July.

The company had planned to invest heavily in its stores, creating 3,000 jobs, but the project was scrapped and Bob Willett resigned as head of the stores division.

Bill Huntly, chief executive of Littlewoods, said: "We have had a plan in place for some time and we were showing year-on-year improvement in sales and profitability, but last year's improvement wasn't as much as we expected."

Asda and Tesco aside, analysts speculated on a possible bid from Marks & Spencer to safeguard its market share.

United front, page 29

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100 4357.7 (+50.6)
Yield 3.65%
FTSE All share 2128.38 (+19.11)
Nikkei 18564.78 (+135.65)
New York Dow Jones 6624.30 (+5.38)
S&P Composite 797.26 (+1.85)

US RATE

Federal Funds 5.75% (5.75%)
Long Bond 87.7% (87.7%)
Yield 6.83% (6.83%)

LONDON MONEY

3-month Interbank 5.75% (5.75%)
Libor long gilt 11.2% (11.2%)
Sterling 112.1 (112.1)

STERLING

New York 1.6162* (1.6165)
London 1.6172 (1.6195)
DM 2.7644 (2.7425)
FF 1.4870* (1.4775)
Yen 121.58* (121.28)
S Index 98.5 (98.0)

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MFI value slides on winter warning

BY FRASER NELSON



John Randall is unsure why MFI has gone off the boil

SHARES in MFI lost 21 per cent of their value yesterday after the furniture retailer gave warning that growth in sales has almost halved in the key winter sales period.

The company said that revenue growth had fallen to 7.3 per cent over the last 16 weeks, against the 15.7 per cent growth achieved in the six months to October. The shares fell 40.7p, to 156.4p, — their lowest level in more than a year — wiping £241 million from MFI's market value.

John Randall, chief executive, said that what was causing the slowdown. He said: "The

growth in our first half came virtually out of nowhere. I couldn't tell what had caused that increase, and I'm not sure now why it has gone down."

Mr Randall said that MFI would have been well placed to gain from any growth in spending. "The business is in much better shape than it was last time," he said. "If there was something out there, I can see no reason why we should not have our fair share of it."

Although the Homeworks MFI stores traded well in the quarter, sales slipped in unconverted MFI stores, still the majority of the UK portfolio. The 99 stores in France lifted

revenue by 10.7 per cent on a domestic level, but this became a decline of 7.2 per cent after conversion to sterling.

The City was stunned by the warning, and analysts marked MFI profit forecasts from £90 million to £76 million. A Charterhouse Titney analyst said: "We were looking at January and February with a great deal of optimism. Now we see that improvement in the housing market is not following through into consumer spending. Joe Public has not exactly got his hands stuck in his pockets, but it seems he is not spending money doing up his house."

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New trains for suffering 'misery line' passengers

By Jonathan Prynn, Transport Correspondent

LONG-SUFFERING commuters on the notorious "misery line" into Fenchurch Street station in London are to gain from the first big order of new passenger trains since British Rail privatisation.

The £200 million contract for a fleet of 44 electric, 100 mph, air-conditioned trains capable of reducing journey times by up to 10 per cent, was announced yesterday by Prism, the company that took over the London, Tilbury and Southend (LTS) franchise last year.

It brings to an end one of the longest new rolling stock

droughts in the history of the British railways, which has seen only 12 new trains ordered for the entire network over the past three years.

The new rolling stock, with automatic sliding doors, will replace ageing slam-door trains, some of which date to the mid-1960s, and will be delivered by Adtranz, the Derby-based manufacturer, by November 1999. They will be leased from Porterbrook.

The LTS line came to symbolise the rundown state of Britain's railways during the years before privatisation when passengers were forced to endure crowded, unreliable journeys on some of the oldest trains still in regular use in the industrialised world.

Sir George Young, the Transport Secretary, welcomed the order as "further evidence of the good news which rail privatisation is bringing passengers".

However, critics of the sell-off said it was possible only because the Government had inflated the subsidy to the new private rail companies for political reasons.

Keith Bill, national secretary of Save Our Railways, a pressure group, said: "Prism is not spending a single penny of its shareholders' money. It's all coming from the taxpayer. The new private companies have been given double the amount of subsidy that British Rail received, and it's from that money that this leasing order comes."

The order is expected to be followed by many more from other privatised firms. They will come only just in time to save the rapidly dwindling British train manufacturing industry, which has been starved of work during the upheavals caused by privatisation.

Holliday has sights set on US

HOLLIDAY CHEMICAL, the specialty chemicals group, reported an increase in pre-tax profits to £16.1 million (£15.4 million) in the year to December 31, and said it had made rapid development in its pharmaceutical division.

The company is seeking access to the US market for ranitidine, a generic drug that the company is able to sell elsewhere but not in the US because of patent protection.

There was good growth in sales and profits from pigments, but intense competition saw dyestuffs suffer a sharp fall in turnover and profits. Earnings per share rose to 10.5p (10.4p) and the dividend increased 0.25p to 5.25p. The shares rose 8p yesterday to 134p.



Filling in: Paul Rackam, managing director of Waste Recycling, and Tim Walsh, the landfill director, celebrate a rise in pre-tax profits to £4.1 million. Earnings rose 21 per cent to 8.1p, for a 33 per cent increase in the total dividend to 2p.

Rivals put pressure on Centrica

By Graham Searjeant, Financial Editor

MORE than 53,000 gas consumers in the South Coast regions of Kent and Sussex have already signed up to take supplies from rivals of Centrica, the British Gas company. News of further defections among the 900,000 customers of the former monopoly is expected before competition officially starts on Friday.

The region is the third to be

opened for competition, preceded by the South West last April and Dorset and Avon on February 10. New figures from TransCo, the BG pipeline company, show that 22,000 of the half-million Dorset and Avon customers have now defected, up 6,000 since February 21.

Competition is expected to be intense on the South Coast,

where price cuts have been offered by, among others, ScottishPower, which owns the local Southern Water utility. East Midlands Electricity's Sterling Gas and Calorx, which links Calor and Texaco. In the South West, more than 95,000 of the half-million gas households have now switched, compared with 29,000 at the start of competi-

Tories plan European index of labour costs

By Philip Bassett, Industrial Editor

THE Government wants to establish a precise measure of labour costs across Europe, hoping to demonstrate the value of the UK's flexible job market. Preparatory work for what is being called an "RPI for labour" is under way.

Government ministers believe that the policy of promoting greater labour market flexibility is paying off both in the number of inward investment companies setting up in the UK, and in estimates of Britain's relative labour cost advantage over other European countries.

Ministers emphasise that for every £100 in wage costs, non-wage costs like social benefits add a further £15 in Britain, £31 in Germany, £33 in Spain, £41 in France and as much as £44 in Italy. They believe awareness of such figures has helped to increase business and general concern about Labour's proposal to abandon the opt-out from the European social charter.

But they are dissatisfied that Britain has no figures to match this data, which comes from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, so they are keen to take part in a programme, supported by the European Commission's statistical arm Eurostat, to establish a European-wide labour cost index, which would allow for direct comparisons of employment costs between all EU member countries.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Boeing expects boom in aircraft orders

BOEING, the world's leading aerospace manufacturer, expects to achieve its highest-ever monthly output at the end of this year, producing 40 planes a month in the autumn. The group hired more than 20,000 people last year to cater for the increase in demand. Boeing forecasts an aircraft boom, last seen in 1980s. Over the next 20 years, the total number of jet planes will grow from 11,500 to 23,600, giving rise to orders totalling \$1.1 billion.

According to Boeing's *Current Market Outlook* document, world air travel will grow 5 per cent annually. Airbus, the European consortium that includes British Aerospace, will be the other main beneficiary from this boom. The aerospace sector now effectively operates as a duopoly, with a 70-30 split in Boeing's favour. The Asia-Pacific region will see the strongest growth over the next two decades, which has led both Airbus and Boeing to look for Asian partners.

Freepages raises £43m

FREEPAGES, operator of a toll-free classified phone directory, raised a net £43.1 million through the sale of new ordinary shares and American depositary receipts. The sterling placing price was set at 47.5p, while the price of the ADRs, which are equivalent to 20 ordinary shares, was \$15.39. The ADRs will trade on the Nasdaq market. The new money will be used to fund joint ventures, including an agreement with VNU of The Netherlands, to introduce the Freepages service to the Benelux countries.

Pendragon lifts payout

PENDRAGON, the car dealer, raised pre-tax profits from £11.3 million to £12.6 million in the year to December 31. Earnings rose from 19.7p to 21.7p and the final dividend is 10 pence higher at 6.6p, taking the total to 9.9p. Trevor Finn, chief executive, said demand for luxury cars remained strong and many new products have long waiting lists. Contract hire remained a strong contributor and earnings from financial products would increase "as the sale of cars and payment packages become more closely aligned."

Unigate £14m shake-up

UNIGATE, the dairy products group, is to make a provision of up to £14 million in the first half to cover the cost of streamlining its British margarine and spreads operations. The action follows a review in the wake of the acquisition of the Vitalite and Golden Churn yellow fats business from Kraft in August 1996. The St Ivel Hemmick factory in Devon is to be closed within the next 18 months, although Unigate hopes to relocate the 160 workers to other sites within the group. The shares remained unchanged at 455p.

Greenalls restructures

GREENALLS Group is to take a £7.3 million exceptional charge against the cost of merging two pub and restaurant divisions, resulting in the loss of around 100 jobs, it was announced yesterday. The company is merging Premier House, which comprises 175 branded pub restaurants, with Greenalls Inns Retail, the 920-strong chain of managed houses. In addition, 245 managed houses will be transferred from Greenalls Inns Retail to Inn Partnership, the group's franchised and tenanted pub operation. Tempus, page 28

Southern News up 40%

SOUTHERN NEWSPAPERS lifted pre-tax profit 40 per cent to £8.2 million from £5.8 million in the six months to December 28. The regional publishing and printing business was helped by an exceptional gain of £4.1 million, relating to a property disposal. James Sexton, chief executive, said Southern was looking to make further acquisitions. It bought 15 titles from United News & Media for £31.5 million in November. An interim dividend of 5p (4.5p) is due on April 1 from earnings, excluding exceptional, of 17.07p (15.99p).

Wetherspoon advances

JD WETHERSPOON, the public house group, expects to raise capital spending in the second half of the year to July 1997. Over the full year, the figure is likely to be about £52 million. The company, which opened 18 pubs in the six months to the end of January, expects to open a further 22 in the second half, bringing its total to 186. Interim figures for the six months to January 1997 show a 46 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £8.1 million on sales 44 per cent ahead at £65 million. The interim dividend rises from 3.1p to 3.4p a share.

TOURIST RATES

Bank Buys	Bank Sells	Bank Buys	Bank Sells	
Australia \$	2.14	Malta	0.857	0.802
Austria Sch	20.26	Netherlands Gld	2.229	2.229
Belgium Fr	59.44	New Zealand \$	2.45	2.23
Canada \$	2.511	Norway Kr	1.82	1.82
Cyprus Cyp	0.851	Portugal Esc	200.48	200.48
Denmark Kr	11.02	S Africa Rd	7.80	7.00
France Fr	6.17	Spain Ptas	166.37	166.37
Germany Dm	2.88	Sweden Kr	24.50	228.50
Greece Dr	448	Switzerland Fr	2.21	2.33
Hong Kong \$	13.13	Taiwan Nts	208.48	195.00
Ireland P	1.08	USA \$	1.712	1.582
Israel Shk	5.71			
Italy Lit	2087			
Japan Yen	210.50			

Notes: Rates for small denomination banknotes, applied by Barclays Bank. Rates for notes apply to traveller's cheques. Rates for banknotes apply to banknotes.

Rates for small denomination bank notes, supplied by Barclays Bank. Other rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates at close of trading yesterday.

Recommended Offer
by
Coopers & Lybrand Corporate Finance
on behalf of
PCB Investments plc
a company established by

Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst Equity Fund III, L.P.

to acquire the whole of the issued share capital of Forward Group PLC

Coopers & Lybrand Corporate Finance ('Coopers & Lybrand') announces on behalf of PCB Investments plc ('PCB Investments') that, by means of a formal offer document dated 4 March 1997 ('the Offer Document') and this advertisement, Coopers & Lybrand has made a recommended offer ('the Offer') on behalf of PCB Investments to acquire the whole of the issued and to be issued share capital of Forward Group PLC ('Forward'). Terms defined in the Offer Document have the same meanings in this advertisement.

The Offer is made on the following basis:
for each Forward Share 230p in cash
and so in proportion for any other number of Forward Shares held.

The Offer values each Forward share at 230p and Forward's fully diluted ordinary share capital at approximately £129 million. Forward Shareholders (other than certain overseas shareholders) who validly accept the Offer are entitled to elect to receive Loan Notes in lieu of all or part of the cash consideration to which they would otherwise have been entitled under the basic terms of the Offer on the basis of £1 nominal of Loan Notes for every £1 of cash consideration receivable under the Offer. The Loan Notes will be transferable but no application will be made for them to be listed or dealt in on any stock exchange or any other trading facility.

The full terms and conditions of the Offer and the Loan Note Alternative (including details of how the Offer may be accepted) are set out in the Offer Document and the Form of Acceptance.

The Offer has, by means of this advertisement, been extended to all persons to whom the Offer Document may not be despatched or who hold, or who are entitled to have allotted or issued to them, Forward Shares. Such persons are informed that copies of the Offer Document and Form of Acceptance are available for collection during normal business hours from Lloyds Bank Registrars, The Causeway, Worthing, West Sussex BN99 6DA.

The Offer, which has been made by means of the Offer Document and this advertisement and the Loan Note Alternative, will each be open for acceptance until 3.00pm on 25 March 1997 (or, in each case, such later time(s) and/or date(s) as PCB Investments, subject to the rules of the Code, may decide).

The directors of Forward, who have been so advised by Price Waterhouse Corporate Finance ('Price Waterhouse') have stated that they consider the terms of the Offer to be fair and reasonable and have unanimously recommended all Forward Shareholders to accept the Offer as they have irrevocably undertaken to do in respect of their holdings of Forward Shares. The Offer is not being made, directly or indirectly, in or into the USA, Canada, Australia or the Republic of Ireland and accordingly the Offer Document, the Form of Acceptance and the Listing Particulars are not being and must not be, mailed or otherwise distributed or sent in or into the USA, Canada, Australia or the Republic of Ireland.

The Loan Notes to be issued pursuant to the Offer have not been, and will not be, registered under the United States Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or under any of the relevant securities laws of any state or district of the USA, Canada, Australia or the Republic of Ireland. Accordingly, unless an exemption under such Act or other laws is available, the Loan Notes may not be offered, sold or delivered, directly or indirectly, in or into the USA, Canada, Australia or the Republic of Ireland or to or for the account or benefit of any USA, Canadian, Australian or Irish person.

This advertisement is not being published or otherwise distributed or sent to, into or from the USA, Canada, Australia or the Republic of Ireland and persons reading this advertisement (including custodians, trustees and nominees) must not distribute or send this advertisement, the Offer Document or the Form of Acceptance, in, into or from the USA, Canada, Australia or the Republic of Ireland nor use the USA, Canadian, Australian or Irish mails or any similar means for any purpose, directly or indirectly, in connection with the Offer and doing so will invalidate any related purported acceptance of the Offer.

This advertisement is published on behalf of PCB Investments and has been approved by Coopers & Lybrand, Coopers & Lybrand, which is authorised to carry on Investment Business by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales, is acting for Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst Equity Fund III, L.P. and PCB Investments and no-one else in connection with the Offer and will not be responsible to anyone other than PCB Investments and Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst Equity Fund III, L.P. for providing the protections afforded to customers of Coopers & Lybrand or for providing advice in relation to the Offer. Price Waterhouse, which is authorised to carry on Investment Business by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales, is acting for Forward and no-one else in connection with the Offer and will not be responsible to anyone other than Forward for providing the protections afforded to customers of Price Waterhouse, or for providing advice in relation to the Offer.

The directors of PCB Investments accept responsibility for the information contained in this advertisement and, to the best of their knowledge and belief (having taken all reasonable care to ensure that such is the case), the information contained in this advertisement is in accordance with the facts and does not omit anything likely to affect the import of such information.

5 March 1997

De Beers in talks with Russians

By Jon Ashworth

FRESH hope of a renewed diamond deal with Russia emerged yesterday when De Beers, the South African diamond group, said it had held "constructive" talks with the Russian diamond authorities over a long-standing diamond supply contract.

Russia pulled out of De Beers' Central Selling Organisation (CSO) on January 1, threatening to flood Western markets with cheap gems.

Record sales by the CSO, which controls about 75 per cent of the rough diamond market, helped to lift total combined earnings at De Beers to \$1.34 billion (\$986 million) in 1996. Earnings per share rose to 354 US cents (259 cents). The group increased its dividend by 10.5 per cent to 102.7 cents a share.

Sales of rough diamonds by the CSO were 7 per cent higher in 1996, at \$4.83 billion (\$4.55 billion). Second-half sales were affected by the continued "leakage" of Russian gems.

ADT rejects improved bid terms

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

ADT, the world's largest home security and car auctions group, has rejected an improved takeover offer from Western Resources, its largest shareholder.

Western, a utility company based in Kansas, raised the cash element of its bid by one-third to \$10 from \$7.5 per share, although the total value of its offer remained broadly unchanged at \$22.5 a share, worth a total of \$3.5 billion.

ADT said the offer remained inadequate and that there was no good strategic fit with Western, which plans to sell ADT's car auction business, worth about \$450 million, if it wins its bid. Michael Ashcroft, ADT chairman, said: "We understand why a slow growth Kansas utility thinks it would benefit from buying a high growth international electronic security services company but fail to see any compelling reason why ADT shareholders would benefit from such an alliance."

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICES

Drummond Ltd
In Liquidation
THE INSOLVENCY ACT 1986
In accordance with Rule 4.156 of the Insolvency Rules 1986, notice is hereby given that E. J. Barry, FCA of Messrs Leonard Curtis & Co, PO Box 579, 20 Cannon Street, London EC4A 3DF and A. D. Clark of Messrs Phillips Traynor, 1 Watling Court, Chapel Street, London, E1 6AN, Joint Liquidators of the above Company, will appoint a Liquidator of the above Company by the members and creditors on 24th February 1997. All debts and claims should be sent to us at the above address. All creditors who have not already done so are invited to prove their claims in writing to us. The further public advertisement of limitation to prove debts will be given. All creditors who have not already done so are invited to prove their claims in writing to us. The further public advertisement of limitation to prove debts will be given. DATED THIS 27th February 1997. L. J. SHAPPIRA, Liquidator.

MAXWELL ENGINEERING
IN ADMINISTRATIVE RECEIVERSHIP
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE MAXWELL ENGINEERING COMPANY, which is being wound up, is required, on or before the 10th April 1997, to send their full income and accounts, their statement of affairs, their statement of assets and liabilities, their statement of debts and claims, and their statement of the liquidator's report, to the Liquidator of the above Company, and, if so required by notice in writing from the Liquidator, are to attend on or before the 10th April 1997, at the Liquidator's office, to be examined as to their conduct and management of the business of the above Company. Failure to comply with this notice may result in the Liquidator applying to the court for an order compelling compliance. DATED THIS 27th February 1997. L. J. SHAPPIRA, Liquidator.

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IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, section 176
The above-named Company has appointed a Liquidator of the above Company, and the Liquidator is required, on or before the 10th April 1997, to send their full income and accounts, their statement of affairs, their statement of assets and liabilities, their statement of debts and claims, and their statement of the liquidator's report, to the Liquidator of the above Company, and, if so required by notice in writing from the Liquidator, are to attend on or before the 10th April 1997, at the Liquidator's office, to be examined as to their conduct and management of the business of the above Company. Failure to comply with this notice may result in the Liquidator applying to the court for an order compelling compliance. DATED THIS 27th February 1997. L. J. SHAPPIRA, Liquidator.

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LEGAL, PUBLIC, COMPANY & PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES
TO PLACE NOTICES FOR THIS SECTION PLEASE TELEPHONE 0171-782 7344 OR FAX 0171-881 9313
Notices are subject to confirmation and should be received by 2.30pm two days prior to insertion.

□ Dilemma for our mutual friend □ A way forward for one British grocer □ Gas gets more competitive

Too much Xtra at the Halifax

□ THE Duchess of Windsor was wrong. It is perfectly possible to be too rich or too thin. No one could accuse the Halifax, the country's biggest building society, of being too thin. But it does seem to be suffering an embarrassment of riches.

The Bank of England lays down guidelines on how much banks must have put away for a rainy day. This, simply, is expressed as the relationship between assets, and what would be left in the coffers once all debts were paid off and all loans called in. It is designed to prevent reputable banks — such as Barings, say — going bust.

Don't be so cynical. The Halifax's balance sheet shows total assets adjusted for the relative risk they carry of almost £50 billion. Tier 1 capital, the cash potentially left over, stands at £6.9 billion, or 14 per cent of that total, twice the figure regarded as necessary by the Bank. So the Halifax's return on capital is running at 12 to 13 per cent, about half that of those banks among whose number it will be counted after conversion.

Thus to earn the returns the market expects, the Halifax must divest itself of £3 billion. This may seem weirdly reminiscent of those 1980s dinner party

conversations about how vital it was to have the biggest mortgage you could possibly afford, but it is the way banking works.

Halifax could spend the money on an acquisition, which explains the queue of hopeful merchant bankers now forming outside its head offices. But prices for other societies and life insurers have run out of control. Hence the talk about "repatriating" the cash to members.

The trouble here is that any promise of more goodies after flotation, in the form of special dividends or share buy-backs, is the last thing the company or the City needs. An 8.5 million-strong shareholder list all refusing to sell would be a nightmare to administer, while the lack of new equity being issued means institutions would be starved of stock. Great news for members, though, as this will force the price higher in the after-market even before the buy-back or dividend arrives.

One must marvel at the topsy-turvy logic that forces a business

to float in order to end up with more cash than it needs. The alternative might be to use the money to buy market shares, by enhancing returns to savers and providing good rates to lenders.

The Halifax spent £600 million on just this last year, in the form of cash-backs and discounted mortgage rates. The excess cash should be good for at least another five years. The trouble is, the new shareholders would never stand for it. You have to be a mutual to get away with that sort of thing.

Littlewoods boxes clever

□ THEY will deny it, but our grocers, despite being in one of the most profitable businesses on Earth, are all locked in the British Box. We may not yet have reached saturation in our desire for new supermarkets, but we are not far off it. Just as the ideal location for a pub is about three streets away from where you



live, the ideal supermarket is a couple of miles away. Anything nearer is in Our Back Yard.

This means any attempt to build new superstores will be met by a stern response from John Gummer at the Department of the Environment, take months, may years, and cost a bomb. But the City is so accustomed to profits growth that any suggestion of a mere slowdown, as we have seen this year, has the analysts reaching for their red pencils. This is why Tesco is trying to read the road signs in Czech and Hungarian, and Marks & Spencer is so keen on Australia and home shopping.

They are all looking at financial services, heaven help them.

Now Littlewoods offers an immediate way out of the British Box — 135 shops, three quarters of them in prime high street locations, but for one buyer only alas. Ideal for medium-sized food stores selling high-margin prepared food, leaving the groggy commodity stuff to the superstores on the edge of town. Exactly the market that Marks has pioneered, come to think of it, and available to Tesco or Asda at a very reasonable £500 million, or to Marks if it wants to head off the competition.

So goes the sales pitch. Think of your local Littlewoods, and you might balk at that prime location description, but estate agents have never kept a strict regard for truth. Whatever happens, this is the most exciting shake-up in retail for years, and it will either provide the Moores family with the cash for Freemans, the MMC willing, or for another round of fratricidal legal bickering. Just one doubt arises:

this is the personal initiative of James Ross, the new chairman at Littlewoods out of Cable and Wireless. The family has never shown much patience with outsiders, and the plan might not survive him. An early viewing of the stores is recommended.

Picking cherries in the spring

□ COMPETITION in household gas was meant to be as heavily stacked against the old British Gas as it was in the industrial market. Instead of cumbersome restrictions, however, the idea was that the former monopoly would be hogtied by the long-term contracts it had signed to buy gas at well above today's market price.

British Gas needed to maximise revenue in remaining monopoly areas as long as it could. So the only rule needed to promote rivals in pilot markets was to stop it charging prices below the national tariff unless

there is full competition. Centrica, divorced from the rest of British Gas, has little future without customers and so is not much prepared to sit back and lose them. In the South West, competition is proving more vigorous than first thought. In the streetwise southern stockbroker belt, more powerful competitors such as Scottish Power can hope to make even bigger inroads. Hence Centrica's attempt to stem defections of bigger South West customers, claiming competition is now self-sustaining there.

As the Gas Consumers Council notes, Centrica is stoking up expectations elsewhere. What- ever Ofgas decides, the real message for those about to be buried under a blizzard of junk mail from its competitors is: you don't have to switch, because Centrica will cut prices as soon as it is allowed. If Centrica can exchange its bad contracts for its gas assets, it should be able to adjust its national tariff in the light of experience.

The result is not entirely welcome. When everyone picks cherries, poorer customers will have to pay more, as doubters have long predicted. That is an inevitable, if unpleasant side-effect of competition.

General Accident to lift payout 10% despite profit fall

By MARIANNE CURPHEY, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

GENERAL ACCIDENT announced plans to increase its dividend by more than 10 per cent yesterday and ruled out the acquisition of a UK life company, saying that it intends to concentrate instead on building up Provident Mutual.

The shares rose 10½p to 847½p despite a £15 million fall in full-year profits to £421 million. The results included a contribution of £18 million, net of reorganisation costs of £16 million, from Provident Mutual, the mutual life insurer bought by GA in January 1996.

Bob Scott, chief executive, said he wants to build up the group's life and pensions operations, and the goal is to increase the proportion of life earnings to a level that covers dividends every year. The proportion of dividend covered by net life earnings in 1996 was 44 per cent.

Mr Scott ruled out any major acquisitions in the drive to expand the business and said that he has no interest in bidding for Scottish Amicable, the mutual life insurer currently being

courted by Prudential, AMP and Abbey National. He said: "At the present time there is nothing wrong with organic growth in the life division."

Overall, the contribution from life operations increased 37 per cent to £108 million. There will be a final dividend of 22.85p per share, making a total of 34.25p for the year, a 10.5 per cent increase. At the end of December the net asset per share was 675p, although Mr Scott said the stock's current net asset value is 734p.

The results are slightly bet-



Scott ruled out acquisitions

ter than the City had expected and GA will now be under pressure to return to shareholders some of its surplus capital, estimated at £1 billion.

Mr Scott said that GA has a "progressive dividend policy" and added: "As far as dividends are concerned, each year will be treated on its own merits."

Meanwhile, personal motor insurance rates look set to rise across the industry as GA, in common with other insurers, plans to increase premiums by more than 3 per cent from April 1. Mr Scott is likely to make further adjustments in July. He said GA achieved 2.3 per cent rises in rates last year, although some customers have deserted as a result.

The company's worldwide underwriting deficit for the full year increased from £130 million to £212 million. This rise was because of increased competition in the United Kingdom and weather-related losses in America. In total, weather losses were up from around £100 million in 1995 to £130 million in 1996.

Tempus, page 28

Ladbroke closing property division

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

LADBROKE, the hotels and betting company, is closing its property division at a cost of £52 million, it was announced yesterday.

The latest charge will increase, to more than £100 million, the net exceptional charges that will be included in the company's annual results, due tomorrow.

Yesterday the company completed the sale of ten commercial and residential properties to Minerva for £25 million, and sold an office block in Boston to HN Gorin for £23 million. Ladbroke expects to complete the sale of another US property for \$13 million later this week.

The charge will be made to cover the cost of losses on disposals and a provision to write-down the value of its remaining property assets. Other charges, previously

announced, include the cost of settling a rent dispute at the Paris Hilton and the resolution of the legal battle with Sainsbury's over the sale of Texas Homecare in 1994.

The company added that it would also be making a non-operating exceptional charge of £17.6 million to cover losses on disposals of other investment properties sold in 1996.

Analysts said that although the closure of the property division had removed an element of uncertainty the write-off was larger than expected. Ladbroke shares fell 2p, to 227p.

Ladbroke said that the book value of the remaining property portfolio is £70 million.

Analysts are expecting Ladbroke to announce a 30 per cent rise in profits, excluding tax and exceptional items, to around £160 million.

GrandMet expects high spirits

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

GRAND METROPOLITAN, the drinks company, said yesterday that it expected an increase in first-half profits, with a rise in spirits volumes offsetting the adverse impact of the strong pound.

George Bull, the chairman, told the company's annual meeting that trading in the first four months of the year was in line with expectations.

The company said that Pillsbury, the food subsidiary, has shown strong organic profit growth with an improved sales mix and margins, while Burger King has continued to outperform its US competitors with like-for-like sales growth.

The company also said that the prospect of a price war with McDonald's would not slow the company's progress in the US. GrandMet shares rose 6½p, to 460p.

Hotel group finds room for expansion

Thistle stalks growth

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

THISTLE HOTELS, Britain's second largest hotel group, is aiming to add 2,000 rooms to its hotel portfolio in the next few years as it concentrates on organic growth.

The company, which has 13,250 rooms at 100 sites, also plans to rebrand about 20 hotels under the Thistle name. Capital expenditure will rise from the £52 million of 1996 to £55 million this year.

Thistle, which is 46 per cent owned by New Zealand-based Brierley Investments, un-

veiled a 73 per cent increase in pre-tax profits, excluding exceptional items, to £60 million. Exceptional charges of £88 million resulted from the revaluation of the estate. Overall turnover increased 8.5 per cent to £290 million.

Thistle shares fell 8p to 198p, with analysts disappointed that the results were not as strong as those of the company's rivals. There was also concern that the rising pound could hit overseas bookings. Thistle, formerly known as Mount Charlotte Group, floated in October, priced at 170p.

Gearing fell to 31 per cent last year after the group used flotation proceeds of £250 million to reduce debt to £360 million.

Overall occupancy levels rose from 65.7 to 66.7 per cent despite closures for refurbishment. Room rates rose 13.8 per cent as the company shifted towards the commercial market, which accounts for 46.5 per cent of total business.

Robert Peel, chief executive, said early trading in 1997 was well ahead of last year's. A maiden final dividend of 2p is payable on May 23.

CRH to cut bid budget

FROM EILEEN MCCABE IN DUBLIN

CRH, the building materials group based in the Irish Republic, expects to cut its Ir£418 million acquisition budget to between Ir£150 million and £200 million this year.

Don Godson, its chief executive, said: "We do expect a continuing flow of interesting development opportunities in all our regions, but not at the exceptional rate of 1996."

CRH reported a 21 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to Ir£193 million for the

year to December. Earnings rose 14 per cent to Ir£40.59p a share. Mr Godson said the group's performance was satisfactory, despite the strength of the Irish pound.

CRH was able to take advantage of the continuing construction boom in Ireland to increase turnover to Ir£320 million from Ir£278 million.

An Ir£7.12p final makes a total dividend of Ir£10.2p, up 12 per cent, due on May 12.

Kerry Group on prowl

FROM EILEEN MCCABE IN DUBLIN

KERRY GROUP, the food company based in the Irish Republic, is actively seeking new opportunities to complement its existing operations in Europe and America after the completion of the restructuring of its core businesses.

Yesterday the company reported a 19 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to Ir£51.2 million on sales of Ir£1.23 billion.

Earnings per share were up 16 per

cent to Ir£26.9p. The company's food ingredients division recorded a 14 per cent increase in sales to Ir£706 million, while sales at its consumer foods business grew to Ir£473 million, from Ir£445 million.

However, turnover in the agribusiness sector slipped more than 7 per cent to Ir£53 million.

There is a final dividend of Ir£2.56p a share, lifting the total dividend 15 per cent to Ir£3.83p, payable on May 26.

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Shares squeezed higher as the signs stay positive

GROWING optimism about the outlook for interest rates and another positive performance on Wall Street enabled investors to squeeze prices sharply higher to close at another high.

After hitting a best 4,359.1, the FT-SE 100 index finished just a shade lower with a rise of 50.6 at 4,357.7. Prices were marked higher at the outset after a 40-point leap in the Dow Jones industrial average overnight. Another opening rise in the Dow yesterday provided further impetus.

But with just 835 million shares having changed hands by the close of business, it was apparent that stock shortages had combined with selective demand for the leaders to squeeze the market higher.

Brokers say there is unlikely to be a rise in interest rates ahead of the election. This view was underpinned by the short end of the gilt market, where prices rose ahead of today's monthly economic meeting. It has also been reinforced by the subdued money supply and a drop in the purchasing managers' index. The market remains cautious ahead of Friday's US employment numbers.

BTR was the best performing stock in the top 100 with a rise of 13p at 255.4p. Brokers were excited by news of the link-up between its Brook Hansen electrical drives subsidiary and Danfoss Group, Denmark's largest industrial conglomerate. This creates a business with turnover of more than £1 billion. Brokers say there is still plenty of scope for improvement in the BTR share price.

There was also plenty for shareholders to cheer about at Grand Metropolitan as the price rose 6.2p to 400p on the back of an upbeat trading statement. The group played down reports that its Burger King chain was about to plunge into a price war after hefty price cuts by McDonald's in the US. George Bull, chairman, told the annual meeting that the price cuts would only apply to combination meals. All three main divisions at GrandMet were trading well and the group expected first-half profits to be ahead of last year.

A disappointing second half trading statement left MFI Furniture 40.5p down at a low for the past year of 150.5p. The group saw a slowdown in



Barry O'Connell, left, and Peter Woodall, of Canadian Pizza, down 1.1p after 50 per cent higher profits and acquisition talk

like-for-like sales to 7.1 per cent over 16 weeks, including the important winter sales, and compares with a 13.5 per cent increase in the first six months of the financial year.

The shock waves from MFI's statement and the news that Littlewoods, the privately owned store chain, had put stores up for sale, hit other retailers in the sector includ-

ing Carphone, down 2.1p at 60.4p, DFS, 1.4p off at 59.5p, Kingfisher, 9p lower at 681.1p, Argos, 5.1p down at 687p, and Marks & Spencer, 9.1p cheaper at 488p.

A bid approach from Wiggins Group lifted Tomorrows Leisure 3p to 9.1p. Wiggins is offering one of its own shares for every share in Tomorrows Leisure, valuing the deal at

£16 million. Wiggins, 1.4p off at 10p, already holds 25 per cent of the company.

Maekie International plunged 5.2p to 13.1p after bid talks, announced last week, were terminated.

The market gave a lukewarm reception to maiden figures from Thistle Hotels. Profits came in at £60 million but it plunged into the red

with a loss of £27.6 million after exceptional items. The shares ended the day 8p lower at 198p.

By contrast, Millennium & Copthorne rose another 12p to 39.5p as brokers continued to ponder on Monday's impressive profit numbers.

Smith & Nephew was the worst performer among the top 100 shares, losing 6.4p, or

3.5 per cent, at 184.1p after a flat set of profits.

A better than expected payout for shareholders enabled General Accident to shrug off the downturn in profits to finish with a rise of 1p at 848p. Commercial Union, the subject of intense bid speculation on Monday, was steady at 721p. It weighed in with lower profits last week along with Guardian Royal Exchange, 1.1p firmer at 28.4p.

Standard Chartered continued to benefit from recent buy recommendations with the price adding 2.1p at 887.1p on turnover of 2.1 million shares. Investors are said to be still switching out of HSBC, which rallied 20p to £15.72.

Canadian Pizza slipped 1.1p to 95p after confirming it was on the look-out for an acquisition. The group, whose chairman is Barry O'Connell and managing director Peter Woodall, weighed in with a 50 per cent leap in pre-tax profits last year to £2.1 million.

BTP rose 10p to 283.1p on talk of a "buy" recommendation from Merrill Lynch, the broker. David S. Smith was another firm market, adding 15.1p at 261.1p after a visit by institutional investors.

Shares of market high-flyer British Biotech came under pressure, losing 4p to 251p ahead of figures today. GKN, also reporting this week, rose 14p to 950p.

GILT-EDGED: The improving outlook for interest rates was clearly reflected in the bond market where shorter-dated issues outperformed the longer end.

The March series of the long gilt rose 1.5p to £112.4p as the number of contracts completed totalled just 12,000 contracts were completed, while 37,000 were recorded in the June series.

Longer-dated issues closed below their best of the day, reflecting a poor response by US Treasury bonds to comments made by Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Fed, to Congress.

Treasury 3 per cent 2015 eased a tick to 110.5p, while Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was three ticks firmer at 110.1p. NEW YORK: Shares were steady as investors turned to technology, oil and bank stocks, while merger activity kept the transport sector higher. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 5.38 points higher at 6,924.30.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 6924.30 (+5.38)
S&P Composite 797.26 (+1.09)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 18564.78 (+135.65)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng 13490.08 (-57.20)

Amsterdam:
EOE Index 751.40 (+17.14)

Sydney:
AO 2432.1 (+10.9)

Frankfurt:
DAX 3320.66 (+56.80)

Singapore:
Strait Times 2189.44 (+6.90)

Brussels:
General 1201.36 (+73.04)

Paris:
CAC-40 2651.69 (+51.43)

Zurich:
SIX Gen 942.70 (+10.90)

London:
FT 100 3357.7 (+30.8)
FTSE 100 4357.7 (+50.6)
FTSE 250 2154.4 (+20.9)
FTSE 1000 2154.26 (+20.30)
FT All-Share 2158.38 (+19.11)
FT Non Financials 2173.94 (+17.74)
FT Fixed Interest 119.77 (+0.13)
FT Govt Secs 96.01 (+0.17)

SEAD Volume 835.4m
US\$ 1.670 (+0.022)
German Mark 2.7643 (+0.016)
Exchange Index 96.5 (+0.5)
Bank of England official rate (4pm) 4.75%
ECU 1.171
S&P 500 154.4 Jan (2.8%) Jan 1997-100
NPI 153.9 Jan (3.1%) Jan 1987-100

RECENT ISSUES

Anglo-Weiss	111.1	...
C&B Publishing	175	...
Callidore Warrants	175	...
Centrica (75%)	64	+
Core Group	31.3	+
Energy Group (52%)	532.2	+
Howie	31	-
Infobank Int	149	+
North Anglo Educ	167	+
PSD (A/U)	296.5	+
Screen	5	+
TR Euro Gwth Wts	57	...
Tele Plantations Inv	102	...
Technoplast	95	-
VFC	41	...

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:	
Paco Micro	113.3p (+19p)
Albion	85p (+10p)
Gerrard	357.7p (+19p)
BTR	255.4p (+13p)
Shenandoah	102.7p (+10p)
Trinity Holdings	327.1p (+14p)
MMT Corp	565p (+24p)
BTP	283.1p (+10p)
Wolsey	488p (+15p)
Millennium & Cop	39.5p (+12p)
Reckitt Group	815p (+23p)
Card Group	661.1p (+19p)
Bristol	985p (+38p)
Logica	982.1p (+25p)
Close Bros	397.1p (+10p)
Church	530p (+11p)
Ocean Group	493.1p (+10p)
JBA Holdings	775p (+15p)
British Airways	655p (+12p)
United Newsp	725p (+16p)
Royal & Sun AI	507p (+12p)

Closing Prices Page 30

A flat finish at MFI

MFI's winter sale was as dull as a knock-down kitchen unit and the furniture retailer's bosses are at a loss to explain why. After a buoyant first six months of the financial year, the rate of growth halved with the increase in turnover falling off to 7.3 per cent in the crucial sale period. Predictably, the stock market treated the result as disastrous, knocking MFI shares, as well as DFS and Kingfisher, owner of B&Q.

This is hardly the making of a disaster: sales growth of more than 4 per cent, excluding inflation, should be enough for any volume retailer. The calamity is in relation to raised expectations. Exaggerated forecasts of a boom in housing transactions led analysts to expect that MFI's good first half would lead to a bumper year. In hindsight, the question is not what happened to MFI's last winter sales

but, rather, why the early summer surge? The uncharitable view is that MFI's duff marketing allowed rivals to steal its sales. But the company insists that its new format stores stored double-digit gains while the old-style outlets suffered a fall in turnover as sales of Hygena, its mass market product. Clearly, the volume end of the business is still in the doldrums.

Could it be that the market has simply changed? British retailers have waited long for a housing-led recovery, failed to recognise that it has probably been and gone. Last summer's brief surge was probably a catch-up of purchases delayed by recession, rather than the harbinger of a boom. A more canny British consumer is reluctant to plough money into houses. Retailers like MFI will just have to get used to modest sales growth.

Smith & Nephew

FEW European healthcare companies have as large a share of the American market as Smith & Nephew. After years of hustling it has built up enviable marketing and distribution systems; more than 40 per cent of Smith & Nephew's revenue comes from the US and hopes are high that new products, notably Dermagraft, its bio-engineered skin, will keep the momentum going.

But America is a brutally competitive market and Smith & Nephew is starting to feel the heat. Raising prices is unthinkable, rather, the pressure is downwards and last year it suffered a 3 per cent reduction.

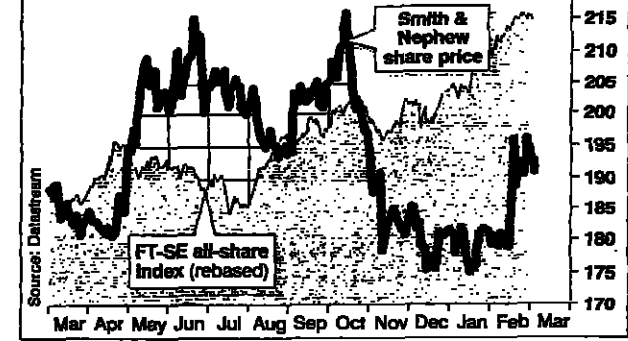
Health maintenance organisations, the Wal-Marts of the industry, are the culprits. Their ability to command

deep discounts grows, as does their size.

Smith & Nephew knows that it will have to bow to the HMOs again this year, but believes the worst will be over by 1998. That sounds optimistic. Healthcare budgets have only one way to go and the pain may last longer than the company's most pessimistic scenario.

The longer-term outlook is positive. Dermagraft is unique and has strong sales potential. A bio-engineered cartilage, the next product on the drawing-board, looks equally promising. But unless the HMOs cease demanding blood from their suppliers, the shares may struggle to track the market.

HEALTHCARE DISCOUNT



General Accident

AN OUTBREAK of common sense is affecting the UK's composite insurers. Instead of the usual scrap for market share, they have been increasing their premium rates selectively in order to protect underwriting margins. As a result, some have lost customers who chase the lowest rates, particularly in the fierce battleground of motor insurance. General Accident indicated yesterday that it is prepared to raise rates further.

Unlike some of the weaker entrants in the direct market, composites can afford the luxury of putting up rates and being choosy about the people they do business with. GA now has a steady stream of income from its life and pensions business via Provident Mutual, which provides a useful buttress during lean underwriting periods.

GA picked up Provident Mutual for a song, and after just a year it is already

showing good returns. Scottish Amicable's buyer is unlikely to get such a good deal. Having acquired its own overseas interests while rivals fight over the remaining UK life companies.

Greenalls

TO RUN one's own business may be a daydream for many, but for 245 publicans at Greenalls, self-employment has become the only option. They are being offered a choice between the sack or the opportunity to invest a £10,000 redundancy cheque in the pub they currently manage for the big corporation.

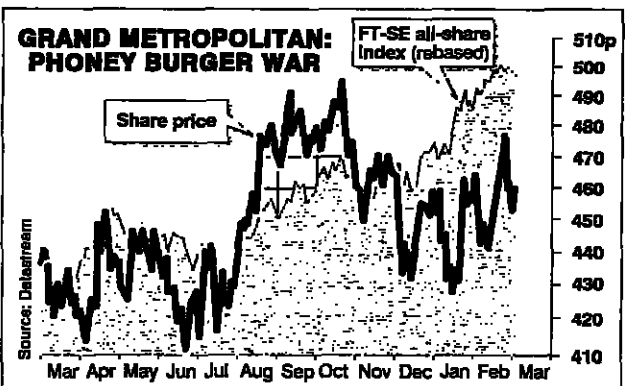
They will become franchisees, a dressed-up form of tenanted pub agreement with marketing support from the landlord. Also, Greenalls insists that it will be gentler to its new entrepreneurs than another well-known pub owner that squeezed its tenants till the pips squeaked.

Greenalls will probably get plenty of volunteer franchisees from its managers — Enterprise Inns secured about a two thirds take-up in a similar recent exercise. The whole project, expected to cost £7.3 million, will generate savings of only £3.5 million per year.

However, short-term savings are not the point. Greenalls is struggling to deal with a problem of its own making. Huge investment in themed pubs and pub restaurants has marginalised the traditional boozers. These consume on average seven barrels a week, compared with 11 to 12 at the new establishments.

Having established that they do not warrant big investment, these pubs are probably set for gentle decline. By franchising them, Greenalls can cut its investment in management time and working capital but retain a reliable cashflow in the form of rents.

EDITED BY CARL MORTISHED



COMMODITIES

LIFFE			
CRUDE OIL (London 6.00pm)			
	Mar	Apr	May
WTI	20.90	20.80	20.70
Brent	21.50	21.40	21.30
WTI	20.90	20.80	20.70
Brent	21.50	21.40	21.30
GAS OIL (London 6.00pm)			
	Mar	Apr	May
WTI	18.50	18.40	18.30
Brent	19.10	19.00	18.90
NATURAL GAS (London 6.00pm)			
	Mar	Apr	May
WTI	1.10	1.05	1.00
Brent	1.15	1.10	1.05

LIFFE FUTURES (GNI Ltd)			
	Mar	Apr	May
WTI	20.90	20.80	20.70
Brent	21.50	21.40	21.30
WTI	20.90	20.80	20.70
Brent	21.50	21.40	21.30

LIFFE OPTIONS			
	Mar	Apr	May
WTI	20.90	20.80	20.70
Brent	21.50	21.40	21.30
WTI	20.90	20.80	20.70
Brent	21.50	21.40	21.30

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol
Long Gilt	112.22	112.29	112.19	112.20	12119
Previous open interest: 12119					
German Govt Bond (Bund)	103.47	103.61	103.25	103.28	10636
Previous open interest: 10636					
Italian Govt Bond (BTP)	128.25	128.40	127.80	127.78	11423
Previous open interest: 11423					
Japanese Govt Bond (JGB)	126.42	126.45	126.37	126.39	1364
Previous open interest: 1364					
Three Month Sterling	93.73	93.74	93.72	93.73	15894
Previous open interest: 15894					
Three Month Eurodollar	92.70	92.71	92.69	92.70	10616
Previous open interest: 10616					
Three Month Euroyen	92.70	92.71	92.69	92.70	10616
Previous open interest: 10616					
Three Month Euroswiss	92.70	92.71	92.69	92.70	10616
Previous open interest: 10616					
Three Month ECU	92.70	92.71	92.69	92.70	10616
Previous open interest: 10616					
FTSE 100	4357.7	4357.7	4357.7	4357.7	15894
Previous open interest: 15894					

MONEY RATES (%)

	1 month	3 month	6 month	12 month
Base Rates: Clearing Banks & Finance House	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
Discount Market: Overnight High 5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
Treasury Bills (91 days): 2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Prime Bank Bills (91 days): 2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Overnight open 5.5, close 5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
Local Authority Deposits	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
Building Society CDs	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)

	1 month	3 month	6 month	12 month
Base Rates: Clearing Banks & Finance House	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
Discount Market: Overnight High 5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
Treasury Bills (91 days): 2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Prime Bank Bills (91 days): 2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Overnight open 5.5, close 5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
Local Authority Deposits	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
Building Society CDs	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5

GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co)

	Open	High	Low	Sett
Bullion: Open 362.50-362.80	362.50	362.80	362.50	362.80
Low: 358.05-358.25	358.05	358.25	358.05	358.25
High: 362.50-362.80	362.50	362.80	362.50	362.80
Close: 359.55-360.05	359.55	360.05	359.55	360.05
PM: 359.40	359.40	359.40	359.40	359.40
Kruggerand: 358.75-361.75	358.75	361.75	358.75	361.75
Platinum: 358.25-361.25	358.25	361.25	358.25	361.25
Silver: 55.25-55.25	55.25	55.25	55.25	55.25

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES

	Spot	1 month	3 month	6 month	12 month
Base Rates: Clearing Banks & Finance House	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
Discount Market: Overnight High 5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
Treasury Bills (91 days): 2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Prime Bank Bills (91 days): 2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Overnight open 5.5, close 5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
Local Authority Deposits	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
Building Society CDs	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5

DOLLAR RATES

	Mar 4	Mar 5
Australia	1.2691-1.2697	1.2691-1.2697
Belgium (Com)	1.3681-1.3687	1.3681-1.3687
Canada	0.6511-0.6517	0.6511-0.6517
France	6.5411-6.5417	6.5411-6.5417
Germany	1.7091-1.7097	1.7091-1.7097
Hong Kong	7.7401-7.7407	7.7401-7.7407
India	46.7511-46.7517	46.7511-46.7517
Italy	170.91-170.97	170.91-170.97
Japan	121.511-121.517	121.511-121.517
Malaysia	4.67511-4.67517	4.67511-4.67517
Netherlands	1.9231-1.9237	1.9231-1.9237
Norway	6.4711-6.4717	6.4711-6.4717
Portugal	200.4811-200.4817	200.4811-200.4817
Spain	166.6411-166.6417	166.6411

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

RANK	FIRM	1987 REV.	EMP.	1988 REV.	EMP.	1989 REV.	EMP.	1990 REV.	EMP.	1991 REV.	EMP.	1992 REV.	EMP.	1993 REV.	EMP.	1994 REV.	EMP.	1995 REV.	EMP.	1996 REV.	EMP.	1997 REV.	EMP.	1998 REV.	EMP.	1999 REV.	EMP.	2000 REV.	EMP.	2001 REV.	EMP.	2002 REV.	EMP.	2003 REV.	EMP.	2004 REV.	EMP.	2005 REV.	EMP.	2006 REV.	EMP.	2007 REV.	EMP.	2008 REV.	EMP.	2009 REV.	EMP.	2010 REV.	EMP.	2011 REV.	EMP.	2012 REV.	EMP.	2013 REV.	EMP.	2014 REV.	EMP.	2015 REV.	EMP.	2016 REV.	EMP.	2017 REV.	EMP.	2018 REV.	EMP.	2019 REV.	EMP.	2020 REV.	EMP.	2021 REV.	EMP.	2022 REV.	EMP.	2023 REV.	EMP.	2024 REV.	EMP.	2025 REV.	EMP.	2026 REV.	EMP.	2027 REV.	EMP.	2028 REV.	EMP.	2029 REV.	EMP.	2030 REV.	EMP.	2031 REV.	EMP.	2032 REV.	EMP.	2033 REV.	EMP.	2034 REV.	EMP.	2035 REV.	EMP.	2036 REV.	EMP.	2037 REV.	EMP.	2038 REV.	EMP.	2039 REV.	EMP.	2040 REV.	EMP.	2041 REV.	EMP.	2042 REV.	EMP.	2043 REV.	EMP.	2044 REV.	EMP.	2045 REV.	EMP.	2046 REV.	EMP.	2047 REV.	EMP.	2048 REV.	EMP.	2049 REV.	EMP.	2050 REV.	EMP.	2051 REV.	EMP.	2052 REV.	EMP.	2053 REV.	EMP.	2054 REV.	EMP.	2055 REV.	EMP.	2056 REV.	EMP.	2057 REV.	EMP.	2058 REV.	EMP.	2059 REV.	EMP.	2060 REV.	EMP.	2061 REV.	EMP.	2062 REV.	EMP.	2063 REV.	EMP.	2064 REV.	EMP.	2065 REV.	EMP.	2066 REV.	EMP.	2067 REV.	EMP.	2068 REV.	EMP.	2069 REV.	EMP.	2070 REV.	EMP.	2071 REV.	EMP.	2072 REV.	EMP.	2073 REV.	EMP.	2074 REV.	EMP.	2075 REV.	EMP.	2076 REV.	EMP.	2077 REV.	EMP.	2078 REV.	EMP.	2079 REV.	EMP.	2080 REV.	EMP.	2081 REV.	EMP.	2082 REV.	EMP.	2083 REV.	EMP.	2084 REV.	EMP.	2085 REV.	EMP.	2086 REV.	EMP.	2087 REV.	EMP.	2088 REV.	EMP.	2089 REV.	EMP.	2090 REV.	EMP.	2091 REV.	EMP.	2092 REV.	EMP.
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Conrail war over

The four-month deadlock in the bidding war for Conrail in America has been broken. Conrail has negotiated an increase in the bid by CSX Corp to \$115 a share from \$108, valuing the rail company at \$10.3 billion. Norfolk Southern, a rival bidder that conceded victory to CSX, will be able to buy about half of Conrail's assets from CSX.

TDG slips

The BSE crisis last year delivered an extra £1 million to profit for Transport Development Group, the logistics and hire company that saw orders to store suspect beef rise. But pre-tax profits fell to £35.2 million (£36.1 million) after the loss of a distribution deal. Earnings rose to 17p a share (16.5p), but the dividend stays at 9.5p, for a final 5.5p.

Darby rises

Darby Group, the manufacturer and distributor of tempered safety glass, made pre-tax profits of £2.1 million (£955,000) in the year to December 31. Earnings were 6.11p a share (£3.3p), and a final dividend of 1.2p makes a total of 2.2p (2p).

Upbeat Cala

Cala, the housebuilder and commercial property developer, saw pre-tax profits at £2.7 million (£2.1 million) in the half year to December 31. Earnings were 4.21p a share (£3.28p). The interim dividend is 1.3p (1.1p).

Brewery link

Brewery interests in Wales were merged yesterday when SA Brain of Cardiff acquired Crown Buckley of Llanelli for an undisclosed sum. The combined company has 165 pubs.

Clubs deal

Waterfall Holdings, the snooker clubs operator, has bought 12 clubs from Regent Inns for £485 million.



John Robinson, left, and Chris O'Donnell yesterday. Profits were at the low end of analysts' forecasts

Smith & Nephew warns of more wounds in US

By ERIC REGULY

SMITH & NEPHEW, the healthcare and medical equipment company, warned the market yesterday that it expects another tough trading year in America, its biggest market, as customers continue to demand price reductions.

The company said that prices, on average, fell by 3 per cent in America during 1996, with orthopaedic implants and woundcare products suffering the sharpest falls. John Robinson, chief executive, said: "We have to assume that prices will decline by a similar amount this year."

Prices are falling because customers, notably hospitals,

are banding together to form large buying groups. These HMOs, or health maintenance organisations, are using their market clout to demand volume discounts.

Mr Robinson thinks that the pressure on prices will ease somewhat in 1998. In the meantime, underlying margins are being maintained through cost cutting and sales growth. In the year to the end of December, sales rose by 6 per cent to £1.06 billion.

Pre-tax profits were £182.2 million, compared with £180.4 million, while earnings per share were up by 2 per cent to 11.2p. The results were at the low end of analysts' forecasts.

The strength of both sterling

and the dollar compared with the main European currencies depressed profits by 1 per cent and are likely to reduce earnings by about £13 million this year if they remain at their current levels.

Mr Robinson said new products should underpin longer-term growth. Smith & Nephew expects to launch Dermagraft, the first "off-the-shelf" bio-engineered skin, in the American, British and possibly Scandinavian markets in the second half of this year. The product initially will be used to treat diabetic foot ulcers, a market potentially worth £1.5 billion a year.

Smith & Nephew is also developing a bio-engineered

cartilage that could be used to repair the damaged knees of athletes. The company is aiming to launch it in 2000.

Mr Robinson, 56, is to become part-time chairman in July, replacing Eric Kinder. The new chief executive will be Chris O'Donnell, 50, who has been Mr Robinson's deputy. Mr O'Donnell joined the company eight years ago and had been responsible for developing its wound management business.

A final dividend of 3.71p, to be paid on July 2, makes the total dividend 6p, up from 5.65p. The shares closed at 184½p, down 6½p.

Tempus, page 28

Anger over Renault plan to shed jobs

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

RENAULT, the French car-maker, was facing industrial conflict last night as unions denounced plans to shed almost 3,000 jobs in France.

The move came less than a week after Renault said it would close a Belgian assembly plant at Vilvoorde, near Brussels, with the loss of 3,100 jobs.

As the recently privatised company prepares to announce losses of more than Fr5 billion for 1996, sources close to the management confirmed reports that Renault would cut 2,764 French jobs this year. Renault will also transfer 1,032 positions within the group, the sources said.

The plans sparked a storm in France yesterday, with unions saying that a one-hour stoppage at Renault plants on Friday would herald widespread strikes.

Daniel Richter, of the socialist CFDT union, said: "We hope this is the beginning of a long period of labour struggle at Renault all over Europe."

Franck Borotra, the French Industry Minister, who urged Renault to open negotiations with unions, came under pressure to reconsider the firm's early retirement proposals for 40,000 staff. Under the scheme, which was rejected by the Government last week, Renault said it would replace the older workers with 14,000 younger job-seekers.

The political row echoed criticism of Renault in Belgium, where Jean-Luc Dehaene, the Prime Minister, has led calls to save the Vilvoorde plant. Belgian unions have called for a boycott of Renault cars and political leaders say they will take legal action against the company.

Renault argues that it has little choice but to streamline. The 1996 results will show a loss for the first time in ten years and, in January, its sales in France fell 20 per cent.

Louis Schweitzer, chairman, says Renault has to cut car prices if it hopes to increase its share of the European market.

General Accident plc CONTINUED STRONG PERFORMANCE

1996 RESULTS

	1996 £m	1995 £m - restated
General Premiums	4,356	4,227
Life Premiums	1,848	1,508
Underwriting Result	(212)	(130)
Net Investment Income	549	515
Life Profits	108	79
Operating Profit before Taxation	421	436
Profit Attributable to Ordinary Shareholders	500	382
Operating Earnings per Ordinary Share	61.9p	66.5p

- Operating pre-tax profit of £421 million following record fourth quarter.
- Continued underwriting profits in UK.
- Contribution from life operations increased by 37%.
- Underlying results in United States and Canada show continued improvement.
- Underwriting profits in both New Zealand and Asia.
- Final dividend of 22.85p per share making a total of 34.25p per share for the year, up by 10.5%.
- Net asset value up 4% to £3,506 million, equivalent to 675p per share. Solvency margin 79%.



General Accident

Bob Scott, Group Chief Executive, comments:
"We are confident that we can continue to be successful in the competitive and fast moving environments in which our life and general insurance businesses operate."

THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS DERIVED FROM THE 1996 AND 1995 AUDITED ACCOUNTS

General Accident plc, World Headquarters: Pitheavlis, Perth, Scotland PH2 0NH
A copy of the results is available on Internet: <http://www.ga.co.uk>

Merged insurers report profit rises

By MARIANNE CURPHEY, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

JARDINE Lloyd Thompson Group, the insurance and reinsurance company formed from the merger of JIB and Lloyd Thompson, published their separate results for the last time yesterday. A second interim report for the 12 months to June 30, 1997, will be issued in September.

At Lloyd Thompson, pre-tax interim profits were up 2 per cent to £10.6 million.

The group confirmed that the proposed interim dividend will be 6.25p, payable on May 16, and that the special dividend of 6p per share will be paid as a foreign income dividend on March 5.

JIB announced separate full-year pre-tax profits up 29 per cent to £27.5 million (1995: £21.3 million) and earnings per share up 34 per cent to 13.5p (10.1p).

The company paid a first interim dividend of 3.5p, as a foreign income dividend, on November 18, 1996. A second interim dividend of 5p (net) will be paid on March 5, 1997, to shareholders on the register on January 28, 1997.

The second interim replaces the final dividend, which would have been paid for the year to December 31, 1996. Total dividends for 1996 amount to 8.5p (net).

Computer Cabs details fare for float

By OLIVER AUGUST

COMPUTER CABS has unveiled details of its flotation on the Alternative Investment Market to raise £3.3 million for a satellite booking system. Shares will be priced at 80p, giving a market capitalisation of £8.25 million.

Cab drivers will be able to buy discounted shares at 72p. They had entangled the company in legal challenges over the ownership of Mobistar, the satellite system that tracks the position of all cabs.

Geoff Kaley, chief executive, said: "Mobistar's leading-edge technology and the ownership of shares in the company by our drivers will further strengthen our business and market position."

The London company has long-term plans to expand to other cities. First dealings are scheduled for April 4.

Serco growth maintained at steady 20%

By FRASER NELSON

SERCO, the engineering support services company, enjoyed its tenth successive year of 20 per cent growth last year, as orders to maintain privatised railway tracks helped profits to rise to £18.3 million (£15.2 million).

The advance of the Private Finance Initiative, and new orders from the Australian Government, combined to lift sales 23 per cent, to £397 million, over the year, as margins held firm at 13 per cent. Earnings were 18.8p, compared with 15p.

The company, which looks after 20 per cent of Britain's railway tracks, said that sales from its newly acquired train testing ground should be about £40 million next year.

A final dividend of 3.8p brings the total to 5.5p (4.7p), and is due on April 14.

Regional brewer to be valued at £109m

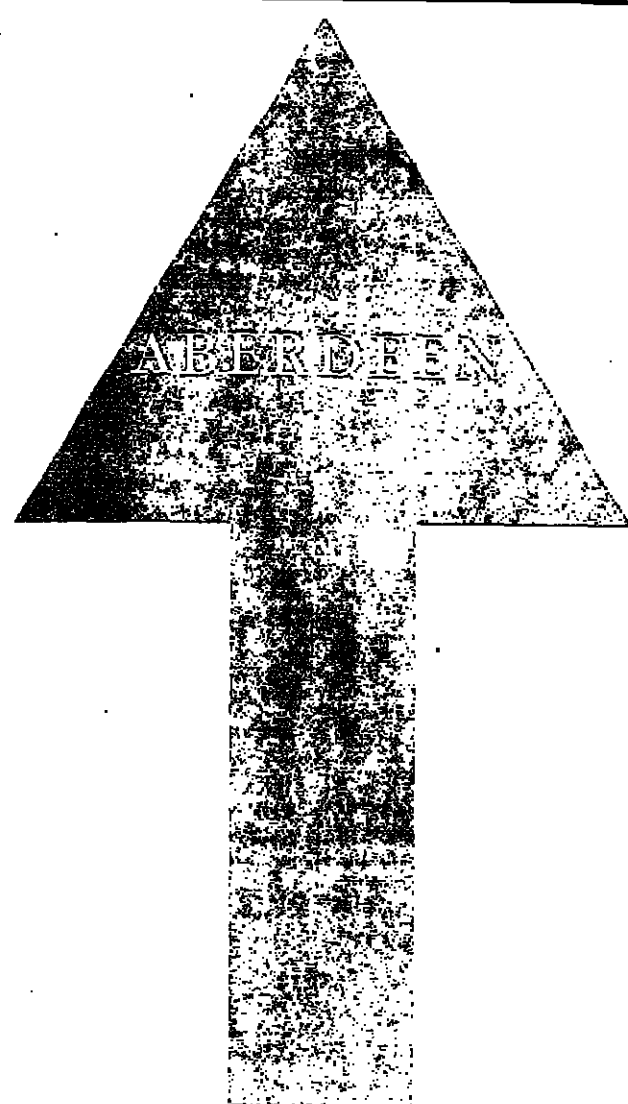
USHERS of Trowbridge, the regional brewing company, yesterday set a flotation price of 110p a share, valuing the company at £109 million (Alasdair Murray writes).

Ushers, which owns a brewery and 542 pubs, hopes to raise £38 million from the float that will be used to strengthen the balance sheet and improve the company's potential for expansion. After the placing, Roger North, chief executive, will hold shares valued at £4

million, while Peter Humphrey, production manager, will control shares worth £3.1 million. The directors will own 8.4 per cent of the total capital worth £9 million.

The venture capital backers, led by Schroder Ventures Fund and SBC Equity Partners, will own 49.3 per cent of the company after flotation.

Ushers made profits of £16.4 million in the year to October 31, 1996. Dealings are expected to commence on March 10.



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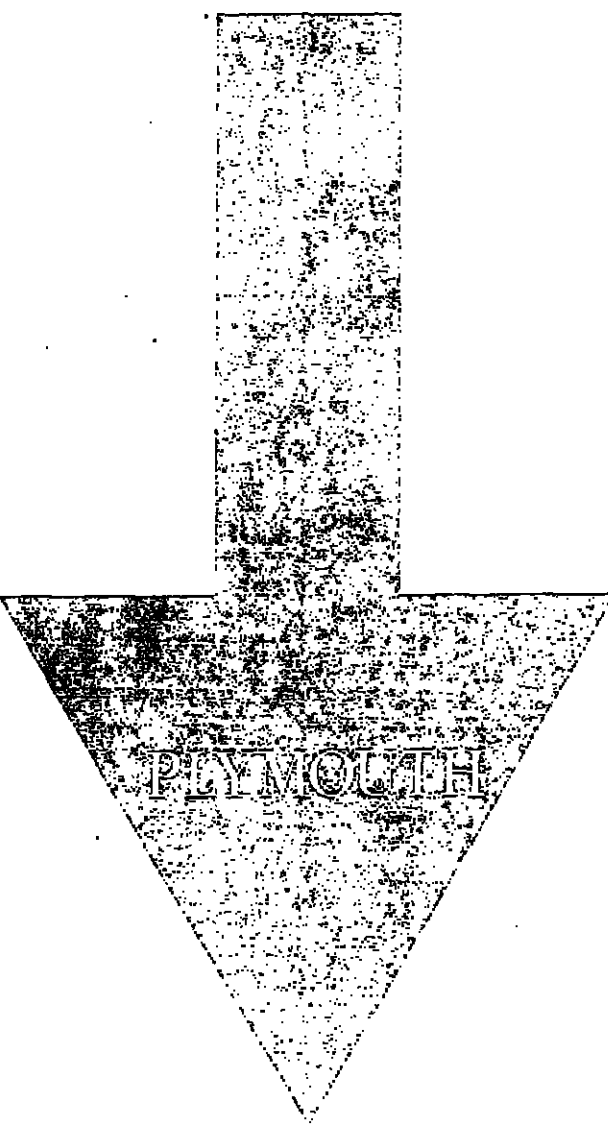
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CIRCUS

A sensation in Paris, Philippe Decoufle's surreal and mesmerising *Decodex* makes its British debut



POP

Paul Rodgers turns the clock back in *Shepherds Bush*, to the delight of his middle-aged fans

THE TIMES ARTS



JAZZ

Homage to the late Ronnie Scott comes in a fine gig by Jean Toussaint's New York Vibes



TOMORROW

Nicholson and Caine in *Blood and Wine*, plus reviews of all the other top new movies

Donald Hutera meets Philippe Decoufle, whose stunning circus-theatre *Decodex* opens here this week

Ringmaster totally over the Big Top

When *Decodex* opened in the autumn of 1995, Paris was in the middle of a transport strike. Even so, Philippe Decoufle's magic cocktail of choreographed circus-theatre, staged at Bobigny's Maison de la Culture on the city's northeastern edge, was a triumph. Those who couldn't drive got there by bike, on foot, or hitched a ride. The two-month show was an instant sell-out.

The Paris Métro is now running smoothly, but history has otherwise repeated itself: *Decodex* returned to Bobigny in January for four weeks, and by the second night all of the seats had been snapped up. In between, the show has toured throughout Europe to box office and critical acclaim.

But, despite such success, the kaleidoscopic delights of *Decodex* will stop spinning immediately after its performances this week in the Woking Dance Umbrella festival. Or, as Decoufle succinctly puts it: "After that, *Decodex* goes to the garbage."



When you do things very precisely, you can speak about crazy ideas

PHILIPPE DECOUFLE

It is unlikely that the average rubbish bin will have been visited by such delightfully strange refuse. Try to imagine Jules Verne and Lewis Carroll devising a three-dimensional picture-book at the Bauhaus, then deciding to take a break under the Big Top, getting lost, and winding up inside a proscenium arch instead.

Working with the set designer Jean Rabasse (the visual wizard responsible for the peculiarly beautiful look of the films *Delicatessen* and *The City of Lost Children*), and the supremely inventive costume designer Philippe Guillotel, Decoufle has compiled a stage catalogue of surreal marvels. The outcome is a visionary mélange of abstract movement, illusions, gags, acrobatics and Jack-in-the-box discoveries. At heart, though, *Decodex* is a paean to both the limitations and the potential of the human body.

Decoufle has been making work for the stage, film and video since 1983, the year he won first prize at the important Bagnolet choreographic competition. In 1989 he won his first in the pool of large-scale spectacle, providing some of the movement for France's bicentennial parade. His staging of the opening and closing ceremonies of the 1992 Winter Olympics, in Albertville, earned Decoufle an international reputation for imaginative flair. His (and Rabasse and Guillotel's) cornucopia of weird, wacky wonders was like a cross between Hieronymus Bosch and Busby Berkeley for the 21st century.

clad in jeans and black sweater. Only the luxurious purple scarf swaddling his neck hints at the flamboyance to be found in his work.

"There is a movement of boring dance in France, an intellectual thing," he continues. "It's very strong. There are beautiful things sometimes, but it's boring. For these people I am like a clown. I should go to a circus, because I'm not an artist."

"Since the Olympics, it changes. People now respect me more. Critics are more prudent; they take care more often what they say. Perhaps they now understand that I could be like a bridge between the large audience and the research laboratory."

"Still, they sometimes say my creations are a bad thing — empty, commercial, like video clips for dance. But it's my generation, so why not?"

Decoufle was born in Paris in 1961, to a sociologist father and a mother who is an environmental journalist. At 15, after training in both drama and circus skills, his desire was to be a mime. He studied with Marcel Marceau, and later spent a year in New York on a scholarship with the American dance-theatre magician, Alwin Nikolais.

While there he broadened his artistic horizons via classes in modern dance — and dance video — with the likes of Merce Cunningham. His own subsequent film/video work, running the gamut from pop promos to arthouse dance shorts, has netted him a clutch of international awards.

"Now," he says, with a hesitant neutrality that sends boasting out of the window, "I am perhaps the most popular young choreographer in France."

Decoufle's source of inspiration for *Decodex* is a 1970s book, *Le Codex Seraphinien* by the Italian artist Luigi Seraphini. Decoufle



One of the creatures that inhabit the mind of Philippe Decoufle and the stage of *Decodex*, a huge success in France

stumbled upon it in New York. "This book is completely crazy," he says. "Seraphini one day decided to begin it. He was in a little room. He closed his door for two years. People were bringing him food. He did that book, and it's a masterpiece."

"It's written in a language which doesn't exist, so you understand nothing. But there are a lot of drawings everywhere, there are ideas everywhere. For me, I discovered that when you do things very precisely, you can speak about anything, about completely crazy ideas."

He tears off a corner of the

paper tablecloth and squeezes it greedily. "You can speak about that, and if you do it in a beautiful way it can be spectacular. It can be *marvellous*."

Decodex starts with a warm-up act between a Dumbo-eared, deadpan funny tall guy and a little platinum-haired flea of a gamin. All along it capitalises on Decoufle's infatuation with the tension between miniaturism and gigantism. "I try to follow a way from the very small to the very big," he says. "Going from the microbes to plants, to the planets and movements of things in the sky."

"The show," he adds, almost as an afterthought, "is also a trip inside the human body." Hence Guillotel's costumes: some feature externalised representations of human bones, muscles and organs, while others — with pleated elephant trunks or spotted, Hoover-type tentacles, fringed flippers and transparent, Saturn-style rings — suggest goofy versions of what can be studied under a microscope.

Three years ago Decoufle's Compagnie DCA was accorded a 12-year contract by the Parisian suburb of Saint-Denis. There, in a converted boiler room, he develops his

work. "More and more I want to make visual things, like a phantasmagoria," he says. "I think I go away, slowly, from dance. In two years I am going to choreograph a show for Cirque du Soleil; it's interesting for me to work for a big circus."

"After that I would like to direct musicals on film, because right now there is nothing modern there and I think I can touch another audience. And I love cinema. It's one of my passions. Modern dance, no."

Decoufle is at the New Victoria Theatre, Woking (01483 761144) from tomorrow to Sat

Bebop a lulu

ONE of the defining moments of the upsurge of interest in jazz in the mid 1980s was provided by the appearance of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers at London's Shaw Theatre, jamming with a number of the country's up-and-coming musicians, Courtney Pine and Gail Thompson prominent among them.

Blakey's tenor saxophonist on that occasion, Jean Toussaint, later settled in England, and has become a stalwart of the London jazz scene. For this concert, he was joined by two other Blakey alumni, trumpeter Terence Blanchard and pianist Mulgrew Miller, in a

JAZZ

New York Vibes
Queen Elizabeth Hall

band completed by bassist Reginald Veal and drummer Lewis Nash.

Toussaint has become something of a local favourite during his decade in the UK, and just how thoroughly he reciprocates this feeling was immediately demonstrated by his choice of subjects for his Arts Council-commissioned compositions.

One for *Ronnie*, a strident hard-bop theme in the Messengers' mould, was dedicated to the late Ronnie Scott. *Glimpses from a Double-decker* and *Piccadilly Fanfare*, both suitably bustling, impressionistic pieces, showed off Toussaint's knack of writing immediately attractive themes packed with just enough subtly displaced accents and rhythmic twists to challenge his soloists.

Blanchard, a fluent, pure-toned trumpeter, responded with typical brio, imbuing the Toussaint pieces with irresistible pep and bounce, and almost stealing the show with a superb feature, *You Don't Know What Love Is*. Miller's sly solo comments on Toussaint's tunes, and his idiosyncratically jaunty trio rendition of *If I Should Lose You*, confirmed his growing reputation as one of the most individual piano voices in the music. The rhythm section had all the snap and control customarily associated with the city of their band-ide.

But it was Toussaint who starred. His is one of the most pleasing tenor tones around: warm when required, but always vigorously muscular.

CHRIS PARKER

Massive swing to old labour

PAUL RODGERS is the singer Tony Blair wanted to sound like when the Labour leader was an aspiring rock star in a university band called Ugly Rumours. Whether Blair would still feel the same if he had witnessed his hero at the *Shepherds Bush Empire* is doubtful. You don't need to aspire to running the country to feel deeply disconcerted by an audience of men in their forties playing air guitar.

The former Free frontman is about as relevant to current musical trends as a 1970s socialist manifesto is to new Labour. Rodgers' old band first entered the charts in the week Harold Wilson lost the general election to Edward Heath, and the world has changed dramatically since — except for Rodgers. As Blair contemplates taking Britain into a common currency, the singer swings a microphone stand around his head exactly as he did before we went decimal.

But Rodgers is in tune with his audience. He sings a

couple of journeyman numbers from his so-so new album, and then it is down to the serious business. He knows we are disciples of the old school, there to hear those venerable Free classics. Wild cheers greet *The Stealer*, *Fire and Water* and *Mr Big* — and they still sound pretty fine after all these years.

Of course, it is not quite the same as when you were 16

POP

Paul Rodgers
Empire, W12

His tone is faster and less supple and he does his own thing solidly, without ever inspiring. The rhythm section of Jaz Lochrie and Jim Copley drives the juggernaut with conviction, and if Rodgers' voice has lost a little of that tough gristle there is still a

flintiness that Blair's Oxford tones could never emulate.

The singer sounded nowhere better than on *Wishing Well*, Blair's own particular desert island favourite. But if things go well on the night of May 1, the Labour leader could be forgiven if it is *All Right Now*. Rodgers' inevitable encore, that he mimes in front of the bedroom mirror before finally turning in.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

Sadly giving back the keys

A House
Dublin

BREAKING up is indeed hard to do, as A House found out last Friday night when they played an emotionally charged farewell gig in their home town.

The band has always enjoyed a passionate following, and the mood of celebration at the Olympia was tempered by a sense of sadness that grew more pronounced as the show wore on, leaving grown men

and women in tears by the time the final curtain came down. For these faithful fans, the show probably spelt the end of an integral part of their adolescence as much as it signalled the dissolution of a pop group.

The evening had started in a low-key manner, with a short acoustic set by Harvest Ministers. Local indie darlings Revelin, who count John Peel among their fans, were also on the bill. Their sturdy, if unspectacular, brand of classic guitar-pop revealed a group au fait with the dynamics of melody, vocal harmony and traditional song structure, especially *Radio Speaks* and *Happiness is Mine*, which have the Byrds and the Pixies, respectively, as their tutors. To judge by the critical plaudits bestowed upon their second album, *Broadcaster*, Revelin could just graduate with chart honours.

Mainstream commercial success eluded A House to an almost Pimprenellian degree.

Their career spanned 12 years, five albums and three record companies, but to little chart success. Between the opening salvo, *Kick Me Again*, *Jesus* (their first and arguably finest single) and the closing snubborn declaration, *I Can't Change* (from last year's swansong *No More Apologies*), cells from every organ of A House's imperfect body of work were re-animated.

The haunting cadence of the bruised *cri de coeur*, *When I Last Saw You*, would put a lump in the most hardened of throats, but Dave Couse's unashamedly confessional mode of songwriting often crossed the line between profundity and triteness, as on *Cry Easily*, for example.

Couse himself has never harboured doubts about his ability to transform feelings of vulnerability and emotional insecurity into poignant artistic expression. He remains, however, a decidedly affable character by virtue of his acerbic, ironic Dublin wit. Rest assured he will be back in some shape or form to wipe those tears away.

NICK KELLY

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament

TOM SAPSFORD



Age: 21

Profession: Dancer and choreographer.

Standard beginnings: Trained at the Royal Ballet School from the age of 11; joined the Royal Ballet at 18.

Professional debut a wash-out: He choreographed a piece for *Dances for Elephants*, a 1994 tour by Royal Ballet dancers to Kenya in aid of wildlife. "I had my dancers wearing 1920s flappers' dresses and moving to music by the Inkspots. But there was a rainstorm which submerged the stage in about two inches of water."

Second time lucky: His *Odalisque* solo for the Royal Ballet's 1996 *Dance Bites* tour was respectable enough to earn him a second commission this year (catch it at the Swan in High Wycombe this week; at the Theatre Royal in Bath Monday and Tuesday). "It's set in a rave club backroom, but it's about nightclubbing in general. The music is electric guitar and computer-generated tape, kind of grunge. The characters are from the different sorts of club scenes. It's the kind of piece that could never be done at Covent Garden."

Happy in his job? You bet. "A company that gives a 21-year-old 20 minutes of prime space is quite rare. *Dance Bites* is a chance to try things out. One of the good things about the mini tour is that you get to deal with a different kind of space, one closer to the audience. You get more involved."

Personal agenda: "I am trying to do something that is relevant to people my age, people who wouldn't go to see ballet but would see modern dance. There's a different pace in a lot of the culture today, very rapid. I want to get the feeling of the five-second attention span. I am trying to make a ballet work like that: short and rapidly changing."

What about his own attention span? "I take great joy in sitting down and channel flicking on the television. There is such a strange, odd combination of things that if you keep going all night you will see the most bizarre things. There is an art to channel surfing. You can make up a whole programme just by channel surfing. I can play Beavis and Butt-head all by myself."

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THEATRE 1

Meeting of minds:
Tony Kushner and
Ariel Dorfman
collaborate on
the writing of
a new play



THEATRE 2

The mind-set of
the middle-aged
lady is explored
in an Irish play,
*Women on the
Verge of HRT*

THE TIMES
ARTS

MUSIC

Georg Solti
conducts in
Manchester,
and gives his
approval to
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THEATRE: The families of Chile's 'disappeared' find a dramatic voice in Cambridge; plus reviews

Back from the vanishing point

Ariel Dorfman
tells Daniel
Rosenthal about
the long genesis of
his play *Widows*

Ariel Dorfman took just three weeks to write *Death and the Maiden*. So it seems hard to believe that he should have required seven years and assistance from another dramatist to refine an earlier play, which also focuses unerringly on the victims and villains of Latin American dictatorship.

Yet in 1988, the Argentine-born author was deeply dissatisfied with the initial stage version of his novel, *Widows*—so much so that he agreed to rewrite it with a man he had never heard of, Tony Kushner, the New Yorker on the brink of international success with his AIDS epic, *Angels in America*.

The compelling product of their collaboration was first performed in Los Angeles six years ago, and finally receives its European premiere in Cambridge tonight, in a Traverse Theatre production directed by Ian Brown.

Like *Death and the Maiden*, *Widows* is set in an unnamed Latin American country at a time of uneasy transition from totalitarianism to democracy. Where the former derived its power from the experiences of political prisoners and their torturers, *Widows* gives voice to the mothers, wives and daughters of "the disappeared", the thousands snatched from their homes by the secret police in Chile, Argentina and beyond.

In Camacho, a town where every man has disappeared, two battered, unrecognisable male corpses materialise in the river. Sofia Fuentes, an elderly peasant, claims them as her missing husband and father, bringing herself and, eventually, all of the waiting women into conflict with a conscience-stricken but implacable army captain.

Dorfman has been "obsessed" by the disappeared since 1973, when General Pinochet's coup in Chile forced him and his young family into exile. "Democracy has returned to Chile, but I still have friends who are missing," he says. "The women in *Widows* experience the worst horror imaginable: not knowing if your loved one is alive or dead."

The defiant old woman and the quasi-mythical river which gives back its dead first appeared in Dorfman's 1976 poem, *Identity*. Two years later, writing in Spanish, he began to expand the story into a novel. He transplanted the action to



Ariel Dorfman's *Widows*, in collaboration with Tony Kushner, receives its European premiere tonight

1940s Greece to give it a *Crucible*-like distance from more contemporary horrors, and thereby give the book a better (though unrealistic) hope of appearing under a pseudonym in Chile, where his work was banned.

In 1986, he returned the action to Latin America for a stage adaptation, which was premiered in Fort Worth, Texas, two years later, winning a best new play award. But even after numerous rewrites, Dorfman felt

something was fundamentally wrong with his play. *Death and the Maiden* would prove much easier to write because he was "not adapting something which already worked in another form": with *Widows*, he remained "too enmeshed" in his Spanish prose narrative to produce effective drama in English. Hence, at the suggestion of director Bob Egan, the introduction to Kushner.

At first glance, they seem an unlikely pairing. "Tony is wholly North American and rooted in the theatre; I'm a bilingual Latin American who's spent most of his life on prose and poetry," says Dorfman.

"Ariel writes very fast, like a dynamo; I work slowly and am hugely undisciplined," says Kushner. Politically, however, they had similar preoccupations. Kushner admired Dorfman's anti-Pinochet activism and had joined Amnesty

International demonstrations in New York, marching to the Chilean Embassy with the photograph of a disappeared girl around his neck. Dorfman recalls how they also "shared common ground aesthetically, both believing that political theatre must not simply inform and denounce, it must engage the audience's imagination".

Kushner found *Widows*, the novel, "immensely dramatic, with a simplicity of narrative that resembles Greek tragedy" (it contains deliberate echoes of *The Trojan Women* and *Antigone*). "I wrote a stage version which was more argumentative than Ariel's. He thought it interesting but wanted a more collaborative process."

"We spent seven days at his home in Durham, North Carolina, working more intensively than I've ever worked before or since. I typed and Ariel paced. We'd write a few lines, read them aloud, then write some more. We changed the opening and the whole rhythm. Whenever we got stuck, we devised solutions that differed from what either of us had originally advocated," Dorfman says. Kushner freed him from his personal involvement in the story: "Tony was enormously helpful. He was the play's midwife."

Widows, "by Ariel Dorfman with Tony Kushner", opened in LA in 1991, but its evolution was still incomplete. The remarkable simultaneous triumphs of *Death and the Maiden* and *Angels in America* meant both authors were too busy to give *Widows* the additional rewrite Dorfman wanted. Kushner eventually said: "Ariel, it's your play, you should do what you want with it."

Dorfman was finally spurred into action in 1993 by a phone call from Brown, expressing his desire to stage *Widows* in Edinburgh. He made some of the dialogue "more magical" and introduced a partially autobiographical narrator, a Latin American exile who "witnesses the action from afar". At last, he had reached what might be termed a *Widows* peak.

Kushner looks back on the collaboration as "a great experience", but it remains the only writing partnership of his career. Dorfman, describing himself as "extremely flexible", continually juggles projects, several of which have involved his two sons. With Rodrigo, 30, he recently finished a play satirising Hollywood. With Joaquin, 18, he has completed a film script called *Playing it Cool*. "I helped Joaquin to develop the central character," he explains. "Let's say I was his Tony Kushner."

● *Widows*, supported by Barclays Stage Partners, is at Cambridge Arts 01223 503339, tonight until Saturday, Oxford Playhouse (01865 788000), March 11-15; Newcastle Playhouse (0191 230 5151), March 18-22; Traverse, Edinburgh (0131 228 1404), March 25-April 6

CONCERTS

Only project

"YOU are very lucky," Sir Georg Solti announced at the end of his concert with the BBC Philharmonic, "you have a beautiful hall." Well, yes it is from some acoustic angles and some points of view. But, as he himself seemed to realise on his first experience of the Bridgewater Hall with an audience in it, however good the sound on the platform, an orchestra must still make a conscious effort to project into the auditorium.

The Prelude to Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina* (in the Rimsky-Korsakov version), though not entirely lacking in early-morning atmosphere, was too even both texturally and structurally. That was at the beginning of the concert. There was no such problem after the interval in Shostakovich's Fifteenth Symphony, which was presented not only with the rhythmic intensity so characteristic of this conductor but also with each event weighed exactly according to its importance. The details were so clear and the climaxes so firmly placed that, whatever the meaning of this enigmatic work, everyone had the opportunity to come to a well informed conclusion about it.

Solti's own opinion is clearly

BBCPO/Solti
Manchester

that, however playful the first movement might be, Shostakovich's last symphony is neither an intellectual tease nor, like the Ninth, a cheerful evasion of serious issues. For him the heart of the work is its funeral Adagio, where the expressively liberated and eloquently played cello solos said it all. The rest of the work fell into place round that formative experience. The ending, though consolatory, was also eerily and uneasily unreal.

The item at the centre of this elegantly planned programme of Mussorgsky and Shostakovich was the latter's orchestral version of the former's *Songs and Dances of Death*. Although the arrangement might be disproportionate to the scale of the songs, it is certainly true to their sound. With a singer as well equipped as Sergei Alexashkin to take advantage of the situation, it also adds a powerfully dramatic dimension to the comparatively modest ambition of the original.

GERALD LARNER

Edge of the abyss

Philharmonia/
Dohnányi
Festival Hall

CHRISTOPH von Dohnányi's pair of concerts with the Philharmonia this week offer both celebration and challenging reassessment of Schubert in his bicentenary year. While tonight's will test the notions of "finished" and "unfinished" symphonies, Sunday's threw new light on the most emphatically completed of them all: the "Great C major".

Only within the last decade have conductors and orchestras really dared not to take the figure nine and the tag "Great" at stolid and over-reverent face value. Schubert knew well that divine play was also a part of honour, and the Philharmonia and Dohnányi duly made the finale a brightly coloured mosaic of Beethovenian allusion.

Right at the start, Dohnányi showed himself alert to the latest musical wisdom by finding just two light beats for the springing horn and the woodwind chords of the opening Andante—and maintaining the same pulse through into the Allegro.

Oboe and clarinet were dreaming wanderers over the determined footfall of the second movement and, although Dohnányi's tendency to clip a rhythmic wing or two showed itself at times, the amassing of the fearsome diminished chords which leads to the movement's denouement was concentrated enough to bring the music to the very edge of the abyss.

The focus on the woodwind as an occasional and independent band of serenaders had been cleverly anticipated in the choice of Mozart's C minor Piano Concerto K491 before the interval. Murray Perahia is clearly falling in love with this repertoire all over again. This was a performance of exceptional beauty, subdued yet incisive, and quietly confident enough to free the slow movement to sing out in utter simplicity, and to take a bold, decisive lead in the finale's complex variations.

HILARY FINCH

Crushes at the end of passion

What goes through the heads of the middle-aged women who rush up to the footlights at the end of *Heartcliff* in order to be very, very close to Cliff Richards? Well, Marie Jones's *Women on the Verge of HRT* (at the Vaudeville) provides plausible answers.

Women reaching their half-century sometimes find fantasy substitutes for men who are boorish, neglectful or just plain missing. For them, the Cliffs and Daniel O'Donnells are a blend of Prozac and powdered rhino horn: aphrodisiacs that simultaneously lull and thrill.

Jones's sometimes attractive, sometimes sappy, play opens with filmed interviews of middle-aged women at an O'Donnell concert. They like him a lot. Then up go the stage-lights and, lo, a hotel room occupied by two friends who like him still more. One, Anna, has brought a pillow case with his photograph on it. The other, Vera, broods about the husband who abandoned her for a much younger woman, and feels she is fit only for a "sex scrapheap", followed by a "sex hospice".

Some of Vera's lines are good, and Jones, who herself plays the part, puts them over with a sulky swagger. But they have become repetitive well before Eileen Pollock's quieter, sadder Anna accuses her of being boring. Since the first act consists of her complaints, Anna's revelation that her own husband has not had sex with her for years, and the appearance of Dessie Gallagher as a young waiter who does conjuring tricks and sings romantic ballads, the interval does not come too soon.

The second act, which whisks the women to a beach at dawn, is rather more eventful and substantial. While a banshee wails offstage, the



Eileen Pollock, Marie Jones and Dessie Gallagher examine the woman's lot in love

waiter transmutes into a series of characters from the women's native Belfast: rejecting husband, philandering husband; young wife who has chosen an older spouse in the belief he will not abandon her; older wife who is prepared to trade love for the show of marital respectability.

What does this mix of realism and jiggery-pokery achieve? Well, it allows Jones to present a cross-section of disillusion and cynicism. What are women who dislike their men but fear loneliness to do? What kind of sex life can the older woman expect? Why should men find it easier to find new partners than they do? Good questions, I guess; but it is a pity that Darby and Joan figure nowhere in Jones's personal mythology.

BENEDICT
NIGHTINGALE

Away the lads

FOOTBALL has dribbled into the zeitgeist of the chattering classes, so it's hardly surprising that it has become something of a theatrical fetish.

In *Golden Own Goal*, Paul Pavitt's farce at the Old Red Lion, the old battle lines between the sexes are invoked when Dave and Stu persuade their respective partners, Nicky and Toni, that they should part during the 1996 European championship—the lads to watch the entire tournament on TV at Stu's place, the women to unpack their marriages at Dave's.

Goals, mostly own goals, are scored by both teams as their relationships fall apart in the heat of the moment. Alistair Galbraith's Dave is a gambling building contractor;

J. Simpson's Stu is a dim, Chelsea-road brickee. They are unreconstructed slob; selfish, racist and criminally ignorant about their wives. The women are handled with slightly more grace. "What's smart casual?" asks Debby Bishop's Toni. "Where I come from it means you shave your legs," says Liz Edmond's Nicky.

But while Pavitt's observations on these working-class relationships may be crushing, his insights on selfishness and honesty are strictly limited; the effect is like pounding a bludgehammer with a sledgehammer. Nevertheless, the whole thing is stuck together with great good humour by Ken McClymont.

JAMES CHRISTOPHER

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Of graduate calibre sought by small busy international headquartering company based in SW1. Duties management (incl. travel), reception, typing, etc. Salary £13,000 p.a. b.a.a.

Applications to be sent with CVs to: Mrs J. Davis, Baker/Whitman & Partners, 25 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LD

Administration/Office Manager to £27,000 AAE

MRG, a rapidly expanding specialist recruitment group which is part of an international network, is seeking to strengthen its Head Office operation by recruiting a commercially minded Administration/Office Manager.

This autonomous role will entail facilities management, personnel, purchasing, insurance, cost analysis and the prioritisation of ongoing projects in a busy and sometimes hectic environment.

You must be an effective communicator who thrives under pressure. Ideally aged over 25 years with experience gained in a small/medium sized company, you will be highly numerate with a flexible hands on approach. Excellent prospects for future progression.

To apply please post or fax your CV to Joanna Bayman at The Management Resource Group, Hanover House, 73/74 High Holborn, London WC1V 6LS. Tel: 0171 430 0125 Fax: 0171 242 2809

The Heart Hospital

Secretary/Personal Assistant

£16,000 - £19,000 dependant on experience

Applications are invited from experienced secretaries/PAs to work for the Chief Executive, The Heart Hospital is a 100 bed Cardiothoracic Hospital in the medical district of London which will open to patients in 1998.

Initially the role will be wide ranging and will involve working for the small commissioning team, participating in the commissioning process, planning and setting up systems as well as note taking at meetings.

The future role will be as PA to the Chief Executive for the hospital and will involve contact with consultant medical staff, all grades of hospital staff as well as UK and overseas visitors, in addition to the usual secretarial role. You will have been working at least 10 years, two years of which in a similar role, have good organisational, exceptional interpersonal and excellent secretarial skills. Shorthand is not a job requirement.

Applications by CV only with hand written covering letter to Richard Dadds, Chief Executive at The Heart Hospital, 47 Wimpole Street, London W1M 7DG.

Closing date: 10th March 1997.

SECRETARY/PA SCANDINAVIAN SHIPBROKERAGE CO.

We are a small well established shipbrokerage company with offices off High Street Kensington, looking to employ a secretary/PA, the right person will be a self-starter, energetic and willing to help out with all tasks involved in managing a small office. You must also have good experience in typing and good command of English. Shorthand/Speed writing is not a requirement but an advantage. Your salary will be pds 18/20,000 dependent upon experience.

Please answer with cv to: Larsson Shipping (UK) Ltd, 10, Napier Place, London W14 8BG

Attention: Christian Larsson

PA to the Director

Farnham, Surrey

Circa £19.5K

With over 3,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students, the Surrey Institute is one of Europe's largest centres of Higher Education in Art, Design, Media and Communications.

Based in pleasant surroundings close to the centre of this historic market town, the high profile position of Personal Assistant will assist and support the Director in his role as Chief Executive of the Institute through the provision of a comprehensive administrative and secretarial service.

With a minimum of three years experience in an office manager or personal assistant role, you will have already developed the necessary organisational, presentation and communication skills and the confidence to deal effectively with all levels of internal and external contacts.

You should possess first class secretarial skills, including shorthand, and be experienced in Word Perfect software in a windows environment.

For an application form and further details, please contact the Personnel Department on (01252) 732216 (24hours) or e-mail ebartley@surrey.ac.uk quoting ref. D4.

The closing date for applications is Wednesday 19 March 1997.

No agencies

THE SURREY INSTITUTE OF ART & DESIGN

LEGAL SECRETARY Covent Garden

Dorling Kindersley, international publisher of highly illustrated books and CD-ROMs require a Legal Secretary to work for the Group Legal Director.

You will have at least 2 years' legal experience together with excellent word processing skills, loads of initiative and a thorough knowledge of Word for Windows.

If you are ready for a move to a young, dynamic, creative company please apply in writing enclosing full CV stating current salary and typing speed (quoting Ref. No. 7C2/18) to Carole Mackenzie, Personnel Manager, 9 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London, WC2E 8PS.

Applications close 19th March 1997.

A. Nelson & Co. Ltd Manufacturers of Homeopathic Medicines

High Calibre PA Wimbledon, SW London - up to £21,000 pa

A. Nelson & Co. Ltd are the market leaders in the rapidly expanding complementary medicines sector. We are a dynamic, innovative company with over 125 years heritage and experience in the market.

We are currently looking for a high calibre PA to the Managing Director and the Finance Director with excellent secretarial skills supplemented by smart appearance, mature outlook, good personality and sense of humour.

This is no clerical job! You will enjoy juggling a variety of tasks - often under pressure - and looking for ways to ease the load of these busy executives.

Ideally you will have a minimum of five years experience at Director level. Good shorthand skills are essential (80 wpm). Excellent written and verbal communication skills are essential. You will be able to prioritise your demanding workload and use your initiative.

If you're looking for a challenge, this position may be what you've been looking for.

Call 0181 780 4200 for an application form or send a CV with current salary details to Pam Sharkey, A. Nelson & Co. Ltd, Broadheath House, 83 Parkside, London, SW19 5LP.

Closing date for applications is 21 March 1997.

nelsons

Rach

NEILSON

MAYFAIR Prep CV writing office

Prep CV writing office "junior" (Qualifications required: excellent spelling, good education, common sense, reliability, able to accept criticism, shorthand and speed writing desirable, computer knowledge, typing, 60wpm).

Commencing salary in the region of £10,000 p.a. (plus excellent benefits).

Please send your CV to Elizabeth De La Rue, 96 Park Street, London W1Y 3RU or fax on 0171 499 1144

DIRECTOR'S SECRETARY West End Commercial Services

A well educated, organized & experienced secretary is required to work with two Directors. Understanding of Word for Windows is essential and a knowledge of Access Database and Excel Spreadsheets an advantage.

The ideal candidate will be over 25 and a non-smoker. Salary £20,000 - £22,500.

Please reply with CV to: Williams Williams, 9 Park Place, London SW1A 1LP.

Bored Secretaries

If you are looking for an opportunity to move away from secretarial, join Foster's Property Management Department. Run your own Property Management for 100 properties or more, in a progressive fast moving organisation. Must be well educated, hard working, have a great sense of humour, sound copy skills, well to work, car owned. Salary £18 - £22K.

Tel 0171 373 5533.

0171 430 1520

Tel: 0171 680 6806

La Crème de la Crème

Fax: 0171 782 7586

...City...City...City...City...City...City...City...City...

Rugby Days!!
Team Secretary
£17,000

This is an exciting opening for a young and enthusiastic secretary to work for two dynamic Directors of this European Bank. The role will be varied, and to accompany the secretarial content you will be arranging events such as wine tasting evenings and rugby days. You will be on the ball and able to use your own initiative. Skills: 5 wpm / Word for Windows. Please call Lucy Davis.

American
Dynamo
£18,000

Great opportunity for a second jobber to join this growing investment bank. You will support a team of busy and fun American bankers, co-ordinating their itineraries and creating presentations. You must be a confident team player, a quick thinker with a good sense of humour. Skills: 40 wpm / computer literacy. Please call Katy Burke.

Human Resources
Administrator
£20,000

Are you hungry for your next step up? In this involved role you work as the administrator in the HR department co-ordinating everything from interviews and induction packs through to appraisals and dealing with temps. Use Word for Windows / Excel and proven communication skills in this challenging role. Age 22-30. Please call Kia Felton-Smith.

Action Packed
£18 - 20,000
SW1

International Management consultants are looking for a young, dynamic secretary to work for two MD's and run the small London office. You will be juggling priorities including typing presentations, liaising internationally and managing the office. Speed, accuracy and WP literacy essential to become part of this friendly & busy team. Immediately available! Please call Camilla Loughton.

2nd Jobber
£15 - 18,000
W1

Young professional Executive Search company based in stunning offices need a smart corporate team secretary to assist three busy guys. Your confidence, enthusiasm and good solid skills will equip you to meet this challenge. You must have 55 wpm and Word for Windows experience. Please call Tara Lyons.

Sec/Graduate
£24,000 Pkg
W1

Top consultant of blue chip, international headhunting needs a proactive, intelligent secretary. This is a stimulating and varied role working at Board level with scope for plenty of involvement and some research. Excellent educational background, degree preferred, sound secretarial experience, fast audio typing (60+ wpm) and computer literacy essential. Spanish or French useful. Please call Elizabeth Wood.

Telephone: 0171-390 7000 Fax: 0171-390 2997

Crone Corkill
Recruitment Consultants

Telephone: 0171-434 4512 Fax: 0171-437 9239

Crone Corkill
Recruitment Consultants

PERSONNEL
Young, vibrant secretary with good typing skills and a friendly personality. Suitable for a variety of roles. Please call 0171 488 0744.

Senior Secretary
Recently established fast growing company. Modern West End office. Must have good secretarial skills, 5 yrs exp. Some knowledge of Russian and CV is a plus. Please call 0171 488 0744.

BLUE CHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Up to £22,000 Package
Well organized PA and Team Secretaries are required to work for a dynamic team in the corporate headquarters of a high profile international company. Responsibilities are varied and include managing complex diary schedules and travel itineraries, organizing conferences and ensuring all projects are completed on time. Acting as a focal point of contact for both internal and external clients, you will need to provide your own initiative and take your own decisions. There are a number of openings which will be starting immediately, totally as long term contracts with a view to becoming permanent. You will be able to show evidence of your organizational skills and ability to juggle responsibilities within a secretarial role. You will also have knowledge of Windows based software and a typing speed of 50 wpm. Standard and presentation packages would be useful but not essential. If you enjoy working in a busy environment and are looking for a new challenge, please call us now.

Angela Mortimer is an equal opportunities employer.
All applicants are positively welcomed.
0171 287 7788
Angela Mortimer

INNOVATIVE TEAM PLAYER

£21,000 Package including overtime
An international company based in the West End is looking for high calibre individuals to provide outstanding support to their global management team. You will need a confident organizational and administrative skills to manage complex diaries, arrange conferences and meetings for your specialist project team. You must be resourceful, initiative and able to work within a high pressure environment, with a flexible, hard working and positive approach to your role. Your excellent secretarial and communication skills will be fully utilized and your willingness to learn will be rewarded with additional responsibilities. The innovative style of working will suit candidates with previous team experience who are keen to develop their time and people management techniques. Skills of 50 wpm typing, W4W, Excel and PowerPoint are essential.

Angela Mortimer is an equal opportunities employer.
All applicants are positively welcomed.
0171 814 0800
Angela Mortimer

Enjoy temping! Want to earn money, find the right permanent job or increase your career prospects?

With Crone Corkill and AIR MILES it's easy!

Our friendly, helpful team of Consultants has lots of opportunities for secretaries with 60+ wpm typing and good windows packages. We'll give you the best hourly rates AND we're the only agency to give all our temps AIR MILES awards.
Make your assets take you further - call our Temp Desk NOW and get your career off to a flying start.

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get you there!Multilingual 0171-390 7000
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Crone Corkill
Temporary RecruitmentEAST, FURIOUS & FRENETIC
(& THAT'S JUST THE MUSIC)

One of the UK's most exciting and successful retailers of music, video and games - we're looking for two lively and experienced Secretaries and an equally talented Receptionist to keep things running smoothly at our West End offices. For the roles you'll need to be PC literate and have GCSE English and Maths (or equivalent). You'll also have at least two years' experience in the relevant position. If you have experience of WordPro and Lotus 123, you'll be at an advantage but, most importantly of all, you must share our love of popular music. For the two secretarial roles you'll also need recognised secretarial and typing qualifications, be able to type accurately at 65 wpm and work well to deadlines.

SECRETARY, OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT
C. £17,000

You'll be working as part of a young and friendly team in the hectic core department of HMV. As well as supporting the stores and dealing with customer enquiries, you'll provide administrative and secretarial support to the Divisional and Regional Managers and the Department. It's a fast-moving role which involves everything from taking telephone calls and organising meetings to maintaining an effective filing system and liaising with other members of the Department and Head Office. Ref: LM01

SECRETARY TO MAINTENANCE MANAGER
C. £17,000

This is a busy role which will require a cool head and a calm attitude. You'll work within a Store Development Department, supporting the Maintenance Manager and Store Development team and providing telephone support to more than 100 stores and offices nationwide. As well as operating a PC-based helpdesk system, keeping accurate records and organising the payment of invoices, you'll also handle account queries and liaise with store managers and Head Office Departments. Ref: LM02

RECEPTIONIST
C. £14,000

This is a new position which will suit someone who wants to take on a proactive role. You'll be responsible for our switchboard and reception and provide a professional and high quality service supporting the aims of the Office Services Department. You'll also maintain our excellent image and provide occasional administrative assistance to Head Office. Ref: LM03

If you think you fit the bill, please send your CV and covering letter to: L. Moulton, Human Resources Assistant, HMV UK Limited, Film House, 14 Wardour Street, London W1V 4LN. Which ever role you apply for, please remember to quote the appropriate reference.
Closing date: 14th March 1997.



CHALLENGING POSITION

WEST END SOLICITORS
Partner's secretary required for small hectic international commercial practice; some legal experience necessary. WPM: salary £18,500 negotiable. No Agencies. Ref: NE.
Call 0171 3071 or fax to 0171 5516.

Make This Truly A WINSDAY!
PA to Marketing Director
International Leisure & Hospitality
£24k + Excellent Benefits

So you are looking for something special, a career not a job, a role which will utilise all your talents and skills? If we presented this company's name you would know them immediately and be impressed with the reputation for being a first class employer. If you have an excellent PA background within a Blue Chip environment, 100 wpm shorthand and good Word for Windows, Excel and PowerPoint, call Corina for an immediate interview.

Senior Secretary
Global Financial Institution
£19k + Benefits + On Site Gym!

Superb opportunity to get involved and organise to your heart's content. Working for a team of International Executives this role can offer you variety and benefits that are hard to beat! If you have good GCSE's, excellent secretarial skills and a steady CV call Anna for an immediate interview.

PAN EUROPEAN RECRUITMENT
TEL: 0171 734 8484
FAX: 0171 734 8501

TEMPS! TEMPS! TEMPS!
Receptionist/Secretary
Fabulous Temporary to Permanent Opportunity
Up to £15,000 + lots of free cake and biscuits

We need you if you can answer yes to the following:
• Do you enjoy lots of people contact?
• Can you put people at ease very quickly?
• Can you stay calm when busy consultants are desperate for your help?
• Are you tough enough to shout at suppliers if they are not giving us a good service?
Actually we need a combination of Mrs Doubtfire and Tank Girl! We really are a nice bunch but do need to have a professional, friendly receptionist and secretary with 50 wpm typing. Ideal age will be early 20s and you will need to be well presented and spoken. Interested? Call now for an interview.

DIRECTORS
PA/SECRETARY
£18,000 + BENS West End

For a fast growing property company, must have excellent secretarial skills & SHORTHAND with experience at senior level.
Call Margaret Lewis on 0171 499 9087 or fax CV 0171 499 9622

TOP SEC/PA
PROPERTY CO.
£18.5K + BENS

To work for a fast growing property company, must have excellent secretarial skills & SHORTHAND with experience at senior level.
Call Margaret Lewis on 0171 499 9087 or fax CV 0171 499 9622

All Box number replies should be addressed to:

BOX NO. 1000
C/O The Times
Newspapers
P.O. BOX 3553
Virginia Street,
London E1 9GA

GLOBAL 1 TO 1

£22,000 + MS + BENS

A one-to-one role working for the Head of Global Operations. Excellent secretarial skills including shorthand and Microsoft Office are required to co-ordinate an extremely complex diary and extensive international travel. Financial background preferred but not essential.

Please contact Margaret Sorohan.

Jonathan Wren & Co Ltd.
No.1 New Street, London EC2M 4TP
Tel: 0171 623 1266 Fax: 0171 626 5259

JONATHAN WREN

RECEPTIONISTS x 2

£15,000 to £19,000 + BENS

I urgently need RECEPTIONISTS for a leading City Investment Bank. There is a senior and junior position, both requiring polished, professional individuals and relevant reception experience. The roles incorporate greeting guests and organising meeting rooms.

Please contact Jane Edwards.

Jonathan Wren & Co Ltd.
No.1 New Street, London EC2M 4TP
Tel: 0171 623 1266 Fax: 0171 626 5259

JONATHAN WREN

PUBLIC RELATIONS
£15,000-£18,000

We have five assistant positions in Top PR Consultancies for dynamic individuals seeking a new challenge. These roles will be of interest to graduates secretaries wishing to expand their careers and work in busy, varied, team spirit environments. If you are looking for involved roles where you can make a difference, please call Lisa Kelly: 0171 447 5542.

MEDIA
applicants
Tel: Langley
Street
London
WC2H 9JA
0171 379 0113

Executive PA
Investment Banking
£25-28,000 + BENS (+ banking benns)

This involved post brings with it a great deal of responsibility, interest and job satisfaction in support to a newly appointed Senior Executive who is Head of the IT Division. An interest in IT and experience of the international banking industry together with strong secretarial skills (50+ wpm) are essential and will be fully utilised in this role which will also involve extensive client liaison, and scheduling of complex itineraries and meetings. An ability to prioritise and thrive in a highly pressured and volatile environment is a must! Mid 30's.

MAY & STEPHENS
Tel: 0171 488 9922 Fax: 0171 702 3351

DESK ASSISTANTS/PAS x 3

TO £20,000 + MS + BENS

Excellent opportunities exist for secretaries with strong administration and banking experience to work within some of London's leading Banks. The roles are all TRADING FLOOR based and incorporate database maintenance and the organisation of travel and entertainment. Age 21-30.

Please contact Melinda Marks.

Jonathan Wren & Co Ltd.
No.1 New Street, London EC2M 4TP
Tel: 0171 623 1266 Fax: 0171 626 5259

JONATHAN WREN

DESK TOP PUBLISHING

RATES: TO £12.50 PER HOUR

Two renowned Investment Banks are currently seeking 4 presentation experts with excellent knowledge of PowerPoint for long term temporary assignments. The hours are 1.00 pm to 9.00 pm, shift hours, and 9.00 am to 5.00 pm.

Candidates must be available immediately!

Please contact Debra Berry.

Jonathan Wren & Co Ltd.
No.1 New Street, London EC2M 4TP
Tel: 0171 623 1266 Fax: 0171 626 5259

JONATHAN WREN

PA to SENIOR CONSULTANT
B.M.A. COMMUNICATIONS

BMA Communications is a fast growing, lively, award winning and independent PR and marketing consultancy specialising in consumer goods and retailing. We are looking for a bright, enthusiastic, self motivated person to act as a Personal Assistant to one of the company's Senior Consultants. If you have experience of Microsoft Word and Excel, and working under pressure, can cope with deadlines and working under pressure, and are looking for a step up from the usual secretarial job then this is a stimulating and rewarding position. Send your CV to: Jacqueline Jeffery

BMA Communications
Alpha Studios
4-6 Abney Road
Wandsworth Common
London SW17 7ED
Fax: 0171 682 2488
Salary: £17,300 + BUPA + profit share

PA TO DIRECTOR

We require a dynamic PA with a mature outlook to work within a successful financial PR company.

The applicant should be well presented and possess fast, accurate shorthand and WP skills (a good working knowledge of W4W & PowerPoint is essential), excellent organisational and communication skills, and the ability to cope in a pressured environment. Please reply in writing, enclosing full CV with salary expectations.

Focus Financial Communications
30 Colindale Avenue
London NW9 1SD
Tel: 0171 680 1365

EXPERIENCED
CONVEYANCING AUDIO
SECRETARY

required for expanding, eclectic, go-ahead Solicitors' practice in Islington. Precision and good speeds essential. Attractive salary offered to the right person.

Please send CV's to: Mrs Betts, The Betts Partnership, "Phelps Cottage", 357 Upper Street, Islington, N1 0PD. (No Agencies).

ASHLEY PHILLIPS

C.£16,000 - £18,000.

WEST END PROPERTY SECRETARY.

We are a small but dynamic private practice of surveyors looking for a SENIOR SECRETARY to work for the partners.

We are seeking a well presented individual who is energetic and flexible. Fast and accurate typing, initiative and an ability to work under pressure are essential. Property experience an advantage.

Send your CV to: Lesley Chaudry: 0171 499 2189.

UNPLAPPABLE PA TO CHAIRMAN
...required for an interesting international business based in EC1. This challenging position demands an intelligent, quick thinking, flexible PA with lots of initiative who would be happy working in a small office (no phone distractions please). We are looking for someone who has excellent organisational & secretarial skills (inc 50+ 100wpm & WP 5.1/Win) & is resilient, hardworking, loyal & discreet.
Salary AAE. Please reply with CV & covering letter to Box No 3673 (no agencies)

ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY/ASSISTANT

THE INSTITUTE OF ISMAILI STUDIES, SW1L
Administrative Secretary/Assistant required, reporting to the head of the Department of Academic Research and Publications. Applicants should have at least three years' office experience (preferably within an academic environment), good W4W computing skills, and excellent interpersonal and work management skills. Salary commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Please write with full CV to: The Administrator, The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 42-44 Grosvenor, London SW1W 0ER. (Tel 0171 881 6800).

More Than A Secretary!

To assist in co-ordinating a team of maintenance tradesmen who operate in residential properties in the Balgravin/Knightbridge area. Able to liaise with both professional and private clients on a day-to-day basis. Must be a good communicator and be able to work under pressure. Computer literacy essential. Property experience preferable. Salary negotiable.

CV's to: Maudslayi Ltd,
22 Hess Place,
London SW1X 0EP.

FIRST CLASS SEC/PA 28+

Required for small but busy West End Surveys. Must be fast and accurate. Knowledge of WordPerfect for Windows 6.1 and PROPERTY EXPERIENCE ESSENTIAL.

Excellent salary + bonus.
20 days annual leave.
Fax CV's to 0171 637 8870 ref:621

DIRECTOR'S PA
£18,000

Top Producing division of International Property Consultants needs outgoing hardworking PA with previous Estates Mgmt experience.

Call Suzie/Jocelyn - 0171 589 1866
ST JAMES'S CONSULTANCY

SHEILA CHILDS RECRUITMENT

£25,000 - PR W1 - Vibrant role for a PA par excellence. Must thrive on pace and be expert at juggling a multitude of tasks. Age 28-37, 90/60 - Shorthand a must.

£24,000 City - Chairmans PA - exciting opportunity for bright resourceful team player. Age 25-35. 60+ W4W + PowerPoint.

£22,000 - Banking Package - City - French speaking secretary for fast moving Corporate Finance. Age 22-35. Good W4W + PowerPoint.

4 Ganton Street, London W1V 1LJ
Telephone: 0171 437 3111 Fax: 0171 437 4050

Tel: 0171 680 6806

La Crème de la Crème

Fax: 0171 782 7386

OFFICE MANAGER
£25,000

A key role in this international holding company offering total involvement for a proactive individual with a keen business mind. A fair for prioritising and a confident, professional manner will prove invaluable. 80wpm shorthand, 60wpm typing. Please telephone 0171 495 2321.

Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS**PA TO FD**
£22,000 + PKG

Extremely easy going, young and friendly financial director described as a "modern manager" needs an enthusiastic PA. Suit someone with big company background-looking for the next step up the ladder. Word for Windows and Excel. 55wpm typing. Please telephone 0171 495 2321.

Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS**COUNTRY HOUSES**
£20,000

Supporting this charming partner, you will enjoy lots of personal work and client contact in this prestigious west end property company. A lively, enthusiastic personality with professional flair will fit in perfectly. Age mid 20s. 60wpm typing. Please telephone 0171 495 2321.

Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS**TEAM ORGANISER**
£24,000 PKG

A varied, interesting brief including organising events and producing Powerpoint presentations for a team of corporate banking managers. Your excellent organisational skills will be appreciated by (allegedly!) the bank's nicest team. Normal hours. Please telephone 0171 628 9529.

Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS**HR CHALLENGE**
£30,000

A very special person is needed as PA to the MD of this HR oriented company. Your persuasive skills, fluent French or German, organisational skills and enthusiasm will ensure your success with this progressive corporation. 60wpm typing. Please telephone 0171 628 9529.

Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

Our prestigious clients based in City / West End / Docklands seek experienced secretaries for short and long-term assignments. If you have 50wpm (shorthand) WPM, Powerpoint or Excel skills and are looking for a long-term or freelance appointment, you are. Call Rhodila Marshall at Tate Appointments on 0171 408 0425 for an immediate interview.

Personal Assistant**£20,000 + PRP & Xmas bonus**

The head of this 'business' has been in place for 6 months and is now looking for a competent and enthusiastic PA to join him and set up his office from scratch. Organise his working life (and those of his two colleagues) and then help with plans for growth which will include increasing the number of staff in London and opening an office in Scotland. Your number one boss is the National Director of Corporate Finance, he enjoys a varied working life including public speaking engagements and therefore your position should be equally diverse. A performance related bonus is planned, current package on offer is £22,500 + other benefits including a comprehensive training programme. Word for Windows, Excel and Powerpoint a must.

Susan Doughty Recruitment
38A Curzon Street London W1J 7BF
Tel: 0171 491 7911 Fax: 0171 491 7922**PA - BOARD DIRECTOR**
LEADING INVESTMENT BANK
c£28,000 + BENS

This prominent city finance house seeks a proactive, professional and accomplished PA to work alongside a senior Board Director. This is a demanding and challenging role which will utilise your first class organisational skills. You will need to be an up-to-date communicator with excellent presentation and a wealth of experience at senior level. Essential: SH, Word, Excel and Powerpoint. The successful candidate will enjoy an excellent salary and benefits package, fantastic working environment and a varied, involving role. Please call for an immediate interview.

career moves
PA/SECRETARY
HUMAN RESOURCES
c£19,000

A busy and interesting role for a committed PA/Secretary working for the Human Resources Director and Executive Assistant for a top Leisure and Entertainment Pte. Based in the beautiful Corporate Head Office you will be liaising with offices throughout the UK, dealing with correspondence and a lot of telephone liaison, booking hospitality events, acting as a lynch pin in the office in the absence of Director/Exec Asst. Excellent communication skills are essential to the heart of this role. Min 3 years exp (Director Level)/good sec skills including SH and superb presentation are important.

Sutherland House, 5-6 Argyle Street, London W1V 1AD.
Tel: 0171 292 2900, Fax: 0171 434 0297**WA**
£22-24k + Bens**GRADUATE SECRETARY**

Wonderful opportunity to use not only your excellent secretarial and admin. skills but to actually get involved and be delegated to by a delightful, dynamic boss within this prestigious management consultancy firm. If you thrive in a team environment but also enjoy your own autonomy and responsibility, this could be the job for you. Superb package including 25 days holiday, bonus, pension, health, STL. Must have a secretarial qualification, c.2+ years exp. and pref. Powerpoint.

0171 225 1888

VICTORIA WALL ASSOCIATES

ART BROKERS
2 X PA'S
£14,000+

Two Graduate PA's with excellent skills (60/50wpm) required by a high international renowned firm. A high level of administration & communication would suit articulate, meticulous, ambitious team players.

Call Suzie/Jocelyn - 0171 588 1866

ST JAMES'S CONSULTANCY

POISED PA/SEC
to £30,000 + BONUS

Newly appointed City director of global European company seeks 'personality plus' PA/Sec with considerable drive and excellent organisational skills. The hours are long but the bonuses are generally excellent. Please fax CV on 0171 355 1395.

MAINSTREAM 0171 495 1830

TRADING FLOOR**£25,000 Package**

Our client, a leading global investment bank, requires a strong and highly motivated secretary who can cope with the pressures and thrills of a trading environment. Supporting a young successful international team in the developing area of Emerging Markets, your pivotal role will include the organisation of roadshows and complex travel itineraries. Previous team oriented experience in a deadline driven environment and the ability to demonstrate your calm approach to managing conflicting priorities and to show outstanding secretarial skills will prove essential to achieving success in this role.

Angela Mortimer is an equal opportunities employer.

All applicants are positively welcomed.

0171 814 0800

Angela Mortimer

WEST END BANKING**£25,000 Package**

This international private bank requires a graduate-calibre Business Assistant to work for the Director of Corporate Finance. Organising your boss, supervising junior staff and liaising with clients will be integral parts of your role as well as working on your own projects to monitor business information and departmental development. A calm, highly organised and intelligent mind is a necessity to work alongside this high powered individual. Previous secretarial experience with MS Office and 55 wpm typing are essential skills to move into this exciting client focused role. If you feel you would suit a job within a team of driven graduates, please call us now.

Angela Mortimer is an equal opportunities employer.

All applicants are positively welcomed.

0171 814 0800

Angela Mortimer

DIRECTORS' TEMPORARIES

We require more good temporaries with Word for Windows, Excel, Powerpoint. Up to £10 per hour. Age 25-35.

0171 629 9323

DIRECTORS' TEMPORARIES

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Juliet Morris, left, presenter of *The House Detectives*, says: "History is not just on your doorstep — it is your doorstep." Bidston, centre, and Preston, right, are two of the locations visited by the time-detectives in the BBC2 series

History's coming home

Your home may have a remarkable history. Eve-Ann Prentice reports on an intriguing new television series

Madness, the Black Death and sexual intrigue are the foundation stones on which Anne and David Tombs's house is built. The tales of woe — which make the worst revealed by a local authority search seem trivial — were uncovered when the Tombses had the medieval building in Ledbury, Hereford and Worcester, investigated.

The family were puzzled because a local guidebook described their large home as a tithe barn, even though it appeared to have been constructed around two large open halls. Delving into the past proved daunting until the Tombses' case was taken up by a team of BBC architectural sleuths as part of a six-part television series. David Austin, Professor of Archaeology at the University of Wales, Lampeter, Mac Dowdy of Cambridge University, and Judith Miller, an interior design historian, have investigated six homes in Britain for the series. *The House Detectives*, which began on BBC2 last night.

The Tombses already knew their house, Abbots Lodge, had been home to local vicars from the early 1800s until the 1960s. The experts went on to prove that the family had been right to question its reputation as an old tithe barn.

In fact, a survey in 1288 by the Bishop of Hereford, known as the *Red Book*, showed that the Lodge had comprised two buildings erect-

ed side by side, one occupied by a vicar and the other by a deacon. Further research uncovered a fascinating glimpse of English religious life down the centuries, including details of the less salubrious aspects of some members of the priesthood who lived there.

Juliet Morris, who presents *The House Detectives*, says: "Watch the programmes and you'll be able to unlock the secrets of your own home. Ordinary houses reveal as much about British history and how people lived in the past as grand palaces and castles. The series proves that history is not just on your doorstep — it is your doorstep."

WIN A DETECTIVE GUIDE

READERS may have seen the feature in *Weekend* last Saturday on tracing a house's history. Now you can win a copy of the book, *Be Your Own House Detective*, to be published by BBC Books. It accompanies the series and shows how to gather details of your home's history, offering a step-by-step guide.

First, answer the following question (the answer is contained in the article above): Which six places in Britain do *The House Detectives* visit during the BBC2 series?

Send answers on postcards to House Detective Offer, Midas Public Relations, 7-8 Kendrick Mews, London SW7 3HG, to arrive by next Wednesday. The first 20 with the correct answer will receive the book, which goes on sale on March 20 at £16.99. Usual *Times* rules apply.

In Ledbury, the Tombses have been inspired to continue research into the lives of the vicars who once occupied their home.

The house detectives offer the following advice for anyone wanting to trace the history of their home:

- Visit your local records office and look at old maps to find out when the house was built and how the area has changed.
- View the property from outside and identify the general style, such as Georgian or Victorian.
- Chimneys are strong clues to the date and general history of a building.
- Compare the front with sides and back. If the style differs, there is a chance that it is an early house masked by later changes.
- Look at the general proportions of the rooms. Low ceilings, for example, can indicate medieval and Renaissance origins.
- Make a plan of the general layout — is it one, unified design or has it evolved?
- Look at doors and windows. Although these are sometimes changed or replaced, there are often tell-tale fragments from earlier features.
- When decorating or renovating, note earlier colour schemes and styles of plasterwork.
- Go to the attic and look at the roof. Many features, such as roof timbers, are likely to be original.

Matthew Bond, page 47

Katherine Bergen reports on a real labour of love

Prisoner builds a £50,000 mansion

Paul Wood built the house of his dreams while serving a four-year sentence for fraud in Verne prison, Portland, Dorset. He used his time to construct a 16-room Victorian dolls' house and 230 pieces of furniture, made from 25,000 pieces of wood. His tools were a broken hacksaw blade, a small knife and sandpaper.

"I had been building model boats from kits," he says, "and after seeing a picture of Britannia House and other dolls' houses in a magazine, I set about designing what is now Barnard Hall."

The lavishly detailed house, which Mr Wood named after his girlfriend, took 5,000 hours to complete and has just gone on permanent display at the London Toy Museum. Mr Wood admits he took wood from the prison carpentry class and built the house secretly in his cell. "The main problem I had in the beginning was to obtain all the materials and hide them from the prison authorities due to the size of the project," he says. "I knew that otherwise I would not be allowed to build it as the rules state that no model larger than 18 by 12 inches can be made. Therefore, I designed it in four sections — the main section, two side sections and the steps assembly — each piece to be built separately."

Prison authorities eventually discovered the project, but allowed Mr Wood to continue so long as he paid for the wood. The



The dolls' house, at the London Toy and Model Museum

model also survived vandalism by another prisoner and was completed in 1990.

The model is more than 3ft high and includes four bedrooms, a music room, drawing room, dining room, nursery, study, kitchen, pantry and servants' quarters. It features hinged shutters, roof tiles, hand-veneered floors, an elaborate 60-step staircase, paneling, marble fireplaces, a clay-

tilled kitchen floor and 40 working lights. Experts say it is worth about £50,000. Mr Wood says the materials cost him £5,000. "But it gave me great pleasure in building, although at times I found it frustrating and never-ending," he says, "and a real sense of achievement when I finally completed it."

● The London Toy and Model Museum, 21-23 Craven Hill, London W2 3EN; 0171-706 8000.



All in good time: about £115,000 is being sought for the Clock House, in the grounds of Chippenham Hall, near Ely

It's perfect timing for somebody

CLOCK-WATCHER needed: maintenance charges at a home for sale in the grounds of Chippenham Hall, near Ely, Cambridgeshire are reduced by £4 a week, provided the owner undertakes clock-winding duty.

The Clock House is part of a listed converted 17th-century coach house and stable block while its reception room houses the clock's pendulum. The house has three bedrooms, kitchen/breakfast room, study area — and clock room.

About £115,000 is being sought for the property. For more information, phone

IN THE MARKET

James Bedford at Bedford, 01284 769999.

Sale of the century

■ A Cheshire woman has decided to move home — as she approaches her 100th birthday. Mary Nolan is selling her five-bedroom period home in Altrincham and intends buying a flat in the area. She wants to use the profit from the house sale to pay for someone to look after her. Mrs Nolan does not want to go into a home "because they're full of old people".

Information: Thornley Groves estate agents, 0161 941 4111.

Scotland prices up

■ House prices in Scotland increased by 3.3 per cent last year and now stand close to

their peak levels of 1994, according to the Royal Bank of Scotland's housing index. The rise suggests that the housing market in Scotland has turned the corner since 1995, but lags behind the UK-wide increase of 8 per cent.

Scotland's failure to match the UK rise was because it escaped the worst of the UK's housing slump — and so had less lost ground to make up, the survey said.

Price rises were driven by the cities, the biggest increases being in Glasgow where prices rose 6 per cent to an average £53,375 during the year.

Edinburgh recorded a 10 per cent rise to £71,448, while in Aberdeen, prices increased by 21 per cent to an average of £65,428.

But in Dundee, prices fell by

2 per cent in 1996 to an average of £46,989.

Tenants trapped

■ Men who live in council or housing association properties are increasingly being caught in a poverty trap because of low pay and high rents, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies.

Because people lose benefits when they find a job, most unemployed "social tenants" would effectively keep less than 14 of every £10 they earned in work, the institute says in a report issued last week. Rents had doubled in the past decade while half of male tenants in work earned less than £10 an hour.

"Increasing numbers of tenants in subsidised housing have been caught in a poverty trap, caused by a combination of low wages and rising rents," the report says.

A show for the buyer

FOR ANYONE contemplating moving house this year, the Homebuyer Show at London Olympia could be the place to visit this weekend. Housebuilders, estate agents, building societies, banks and solicitors will be there to advise. Free seminars include one on "shared ownership explained", which will outline the benefits of buying part-rent, part-buy at a subsidised rate.

New homes by developers, including Barratt, Bryant and Alfred McAlpine, and studio flats, loft conversions and riverside warehouses, will be for sale.

A Greenpeace solar electric kitchen will be washing clothes, cooking meals and making tea.

Admission is free and visitors will be given a comprehensive property guide. The show is open this Friday from 10am to 7pm and on Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 6pm. The nearest Tube station is Olympia and there are several car parks nearby.

● Homebuyer Show Hotline, 0991 111555.



Let the sun power it: Greenpeace's solar kitchen

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THE TIMES

FREE previews of *The English Patient*



Readers of *The Times* can get the hottest cinema ticket of the year FREE and enjoy a private screening of *The English Patient*, starring Ralph Fiennes and Kristin Scott Thomas.

We have a total of 25,000 tickets to give away for the exclusive screenings on Saturday, March 8 — the week before it opens in the UK. And there are 115 cinemas nationwide to choose from.

Nominated for 12 Oscars, the film is directed and scripted by Anthony Minghella (who also directed *Truly, Madly, Deeply*) and is distributed by Buena Vista. Based on the novel by Michael Ondaatje which won the Booker Prize in 1992, *The English Patient* is an epic film of adventure, intrigue, betrayal and love about four strangers whose diverse lives become inextricably connected.

HOW TO GET YOUR FREE TICKET

Collect the four FREE preview tokens published this week and attach them to the voucher which will appear tomorrow. Present them at one of the cinemas (listed in Monday's newspaper) between 5pm Thursday, March 6 and the close of business on Friday, March 7. Each voucher, with four tokens attached, entitles you to one FREE ticket. Tickets will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. The preview is at approx 3pm on Saturday.

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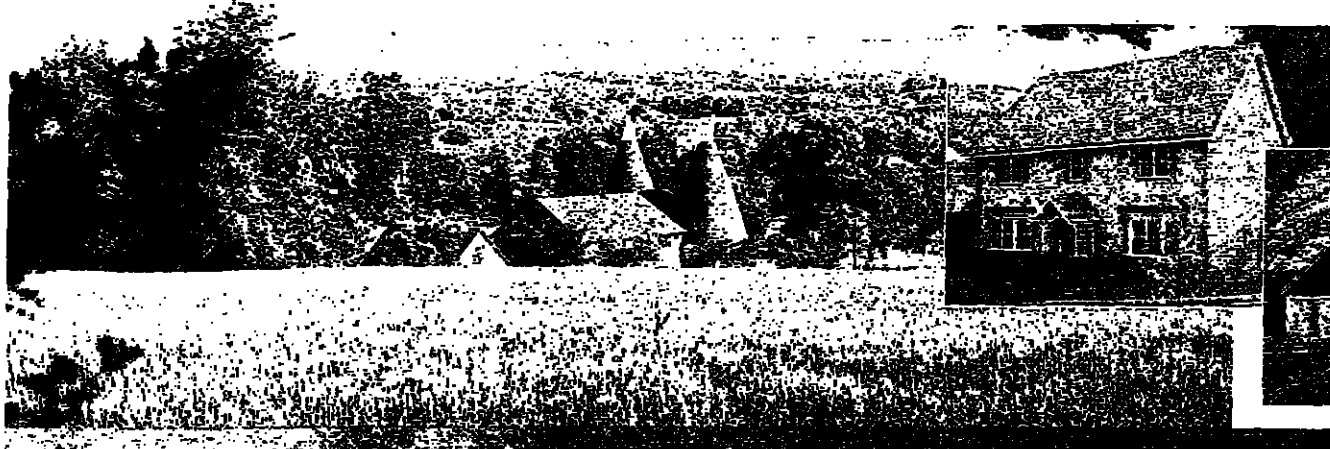
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RUGBY UNION

Scotland selectors repay players with rubber stamp

BY MARK SOUSTER

FOR the first time since the five nations' championship last year, Scotland have named an unchanged side, for the match against France in Paris a week on Saturday. Given the comprehensive manner in which Scotland beat Ireland last weekend, the selectors needed little encouragement to rubber stamp the XV, who will face an altogether more demanding task at Parc des Princes, where France will be endeavouring to secure their first grand slam since 1987.

However, the boost that Scotland received in the record victory over Ireland cannot be overestimated, even though, on reflection, several scores went begging, partly because of the conditions, which, according to David Johnston, the assistant coach, prevented Scotland from showing two thirds of their repertoire. That, together with two successive five nations' victories over France, means that they will be less cowed by the prospect of a trip to Paris than they would have had it been to Twickenham.

Although the turnover in personnel has been marked in the past year, there has been, according to Richie Dixon, the coach, a degree of consistency in team selection this season. The concerns have been more to do with positional changes and finding the right blend in midfield. With Alan Tait and Gregor Townsend in the centre, the selectors appear to have achieved that.

Dixon named an unchanged pack after losing the

Calcutta Cup match and was rewarded with a forward display that surpassed expectation, but he will have noted the manner in which France confronted England in the scrums, and he accepted that this will be an area where the relatively inexperienced Scotland front row, which was not entirely convincing against a robust Ireland trio, will be sorely tested.

That aside, Dixon remains

SCOTLAND

To play France, March 15
R J S Shepherd (Melrose), A G Stanger (Rugby), A V Tait (Newcastle), G P J Townsend (Northampton), K M Logan (Widnes), C M Chalmers (Melrose), B W Rodger (Melrose), J J Smith (Widnes), D G Ellis (Currie), M J Stewart (Northampton/Army), R I Watt (Widnes), A I Reid (Widnes), I R Smith (Melrose), P Walton (Newcastle), R Macdonald (Glasgow/Hartford), D W Hodge (Widnes), G Armstrong (Newcastle), P Dornan (Widnes), D I Watt (Fife), S J Brodie (Melrose).

optimistic, pointing out that only three forwards survive from last year, and that it has taken time for them to gel. Glimpses of what Dixon aspires to were evident in the matches against Wales and England, but fell into place against Ireland, who, he said, had "expected to tear us apart up front, but found we turned the tables on them."

As for France, Dixon said: "They are a bit of a Jekyll and Hyde team. They changed their pattern of play when they went 20-6 down against England. They started to play the same game as ourselves, namely taking the game up

through the forwards and mini rucks. France are dangerous when they flow and go.

"There is no team like them when they are playing with confidence, but we have a core of players who played against France in the past two five nations' matches and the World Cup game in Pretoria.

"The Scotland v France games have produced fast exciting rugby in the past. It was a superb match last season because France did not try to close the game down after we blitzed them in the opening 20 minutes."

Abdelatif Benazzi, the France captain and blind-side flanker, could miss the match, having sustained a rib injury against England last Saturday. He has been unable to train this week with Agen, his club, and faces a race against time to be fit. With Fabien Pelous, the Dax No 8, also doubtful with an injured right hip, France may have to make significant changes to their back row.

Kevin Bowring, the Wales coach, yesterday blamed club rivalry for the number of injuries to the national team that are hindering preparations for the match against England in Cardiff on March 15. Wales have eight players needing treatment, which has forced Bowring to delay naming his team until next week. It had been due to be announced tomorrow. "I blame the intensity of the league programme and the tribalism that exists in the game in Wales," Bowring said.



Action replay: Elliott and Prior close in on Johnsen in the penalty incident that turned the spotlight on the referee at Stamford Bridge

FA ready to replace penalty row referee

BY JOHN GOODBODY

THE Football Association yesterday said that it would replace Mike Reed, the referee involved in the penalty controversy at Stamford Bridge last week, for the FA Carling Premiership game between Chelsea and Leicester City on April 19 if it is asked to do so by police.

There are renewed fears for Reed's safety after his decision to award Chelsea the decisive penalty during the FA Cup fifth-round replay against Leicester.

Steve Double, an FA spokesman,

said: "We have had no formal request from the police but, should we have one, we would obviously pay heed to any request regarding the safety aspect of things. If the police asked us to change the match official, it would be likely that we would pay heed to this request."

Reed outraged Leicester supporters by awarding a penalty to Chelsea, converted by Frank Leboeuf, their French defender, three minutes before the end of extra time. Even neutral observers were surprised at the decision, which gave Chelsea a 1-0 victory, with Martin O'Neill, the Leicester

manager, describing the penalty award as a "disgrace". Leicester supporters attacked Reed's car as he returned home to Birmingham.

Police have already spoken to the FA, but a police spokesman said that the discussions had to remain confidential. Part of the area usually allocated to visiting supporters at Stamford Bridge is close to the tunnel used by players and officials, and Reed's safety could be jeopardised.

Leicester have not objected to Reed being in charge of the match. O'Neill said: "It is not our place to make the decision for the authorities. No matter

what our feelings are, we cannot go round picking who is going to referee games."

However, Leicester fans remain outraged. A group of them is suing the FA for £140 in damages, plus expenses, because it is claimed that one of their number had to miss two days' work because he was so distressed by Reed's decision.

The incident occurred when Reed, standing five yards away, judged that Erland Johnsen had been fouled as the Leicester defenders, Spencer Prior and Matt Elliott, converged on him as he sprinted into the penalty area.

Last four go to extremes

BY DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

AS THE grass roots of the English game have an opportunity to flex their muscles at the Rugby Football Union's special general meeting in Birmingham on Sunday, it seems appropriate that teams from the country's extremities should contest the semi-finals of the CIS county championship 24 hours earlier.

If Cornwall win their meeting with Cumbria at Camborne, their enthusiastic followers can recreate the invasion of Twickenham, on April 19, that was so endearing a feature of their final appearances in 1991 and 1992. On both occasions, crowds of more than 50,000 watched Cornwall as they beat Yorkshire, then lost to Lancashire the next year.

Some 9,000 spectators are expected to pack the ground for Cornwall's first meeting with Cumbria since 1984, though the visitors will have been encouraged by the selection of their captain, Mark Richardson, by the Barbarians for the game against Leicester last month. "It was the greatest thrill of my life and an occasion I'll never forget," Richardson, 36 and an ice cream manufacturer, said.

The chance to play in front of 11,000 at Welford Road was valuable preparation for Richardson, whose county has won the championship only once — as Cumberland back in 1924. He will have seven club colleagues from Asptria alongside him. "Three days earlier, I'd played in front of about 150 for Asptria against Hereford," Richardson said. "So, to find myself in front of thousands was quite something."

Club commitments involving Redruth and Camborne have deprived Cornwall of a substantial contingent of players; instead, they have turned to Launceston, who provide ten of their team including Danny Sloman, at full back, the county's leading scorer. Launceston are the leaders of south-west division one and their coach, Mick Stephens, has co-operated with Phil Angove, the Cornwall coach, in preparing for the semi-final on Saturday.

The West Country also stages the second semi-final, Somerset meeting Northumberland at Bridgwater. Somerset's only championship success was in 1923.

Northumberland rely on the Tyndale forwards, six of

whom have been selected, while Alnwick provide the other two members of the pack and three backs. Paul Singleton, the Percy Park full back, has recovered from injury and will hope to go one better than his predecessors of 1995, who reached the final but lost to Warwickshire.

Mark Vennier, the Weston-super-Mare back-row forward, leads Somerset, hoping to add to his previous Twickenham appearance — playing for Richmond in the Middlesex sevens. The county have an unblemished record in the championship this season, though they had to work hard to turn an 18-7 deficit against Hampshire into a 21-20 win in the quarter-finals.

Michael Dods, who played on the Scotland wing last season, appears at full back for East Midlands in the annual Mobbs memorial match with the Barbarians at Northampton today.

BARBARIANS: N Graham (Newbury), K Logan (Widnes and Scotland), L Arthur (Belfast and Argentina), R Robinson (Belfast), D James (Belfast and Wales), A Boyd (Richmond), D Scully (Widnes), M Gustin (Widnes and Italy), D West (Leicester), M Lennett (Oxfordshire and England), R Martin (Richmond and Argentina), R Brown (Melrose), J Spence (Gloucester and Argentina), D Eves (Gloucester), J Gardner (Newbury and Italy).

Hoddle faces dispute with club managers

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

GLENN HODDLE may be heading for a confrontation with FA Carling Premiership managers over England's hectic schedule of matches this summer.

The announcement this week of a friendly against South Africa at Old Trafford on May 24, and the team's participation in a World Cup dress rehearsal tournament in France, has created a fixture list in which England will play five games in 18 days this summer, including a vital World Cup qualifier in Poland.

However, Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, Roy Evans, the Liverpool manager, and Kenny Dalglish, in charge at Newcastle United, appear ready to withdraw their players from at least some of those games.

"The summer will be a rest for Manchester United players; it has to be," Ferguson said yesterday. "We start training on the fourth of July, while we could be playing our last game on May 28th. I don't know how we can possibly rest players unless we take those five weeks. I have some

players playing on June 8 in World Cup games, which I can't do anything about. It's very difficult."

Ferguson said he has not yet discussed the situation with Hoddle — "it's too far ahead" — but he criticised the summer tournament, which also features Brazil, Italy and France, the hosts. "I once said to Terry Venables that I wouldn't play friendly internationals because I don't see what benefit you get from them," he said.

"You get players withdrawing, you can't play your best team and you get other ideas from playing the ones you wouldn't have picked. I don't see that there's any advancement."

"Over the last few years, we've played an average of 50-odd games a season and this year will not be any different. Add in internationals and friendlies and it's a heck of a strain on players. For young players, it can't be done."

Wolverhampton Wanderers have appointed Dave Merrington, the former Southampton manager, as their new chief scout.

Little ready to run gauntlet

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

HELL hath no fury like a football supporter scorned, as Brian Little, the Aston Villa manager, is likely to discover when he revisits Filbert Street for Villa's FA Carling Premiership fixture against Leicester City tonight.

The Leicester fans have long, unforgiving memories and will probably afford Little, the club's former manager, another frosty reception.

Little left Leicester in November 1994, amid much acrimony. It was not so much his departure as the manner of it that so enraged the Filbert Street cognoscenti. Little maintained that he had received no overtures from Villa, but was then installed at Villa Park only three days later.

When he returned for a league match, barely a fortnight after transferring his allegiance, supporters held aloft placards labelling him a "Judas" and "Liar". Little said: "It was arguably as hot a reception as anyone has ever had to endure in football. The ferocity of it really surprised me. I still get a bit of stick now and then, but time heals. Most people I have met individually have been fine. I don't think the reception will be as hostile

this time, but I don't think all the Leicester supporters will have forgotten the situation, either."

Little's prime concern this evening is to cement Villa's push for a place in the UEFA Cup next season. They have won three of their past four games, including a 1-0 victory against Liverpool on Sunday, and have climbed to fifth place. "We know it will be difficult against Leicester, for all sorts of reasons, but we've got to get into the top four at some stage if we want to get back into Europe," Little said.

Leicester's fears of relegation appear to have eased, although Marshall and Claridge, their strikers, could miss the game tonight because of injury. Nottingham Forest, Southampton and Middlesbrough, however, remain entrenched in the danger area.

Forest play Sheffield Wednesday at the City Ground, encouraged by their 1-0 win against Tottenham Hotspur at White Hart Lane on Saturday, while, at The Dell, Southampton take on Everton, who have won only once in their previous ten matches and who have only 16 first-team players. Joe Royle, the Everton manager, said: "We need new players, we're still looking and I'm hopeful of making at least one new signing before the end of the month."

Middlesbrough's plight at the bottom looks terminal, even though the appeal against their three-point deduction — for the non-appearance against Blackburn Rovers — has yet to be heard. They must beat Derby County at the Riverside Stadium this evening to keep in touch with the pack above. Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough manager, said: "We've got to start grinding out results."

Little: hostile reception

EQUESTRIANISM

King content to head parade on personality

BY JENNY MACARTHUR

MARY KING, the most successful horse trials rider in Britain last year, was named Equestrian Personality of the Year at the Spillers Awards at the Knightsbridge Barracks, London, yesterday.

King, the mother of a 14-month-old baby girl, made up for a disappointing Olympic Games in Atlanta with an unprecedented run of success on her return. In less than two months she won the British Open at Gatcombe on her Olympic horse, King William, the Scottish Open and Blenheim on Star Appeal and Blenheim on King Solomon.

King, 35, who is seeking a sponsor after Frizzell ended their two-year contract in December, has her sights set on Badminton in May — the main selection trial for the Open European Championships at Burghley in September. King has only one ride this year, Star Appeal, who gave her an uncharacteristic fall at the first fence last year.

The Horse of the Year prize was awarded to the show-jumper Geoff Billington's Dutch-bred gelding, It's Otto. The 42-year-old Cheshire rider's partner has become one of the most popular horses on the world circuit and was the British team's best performer at the Olympics, finishing sixth in the individual contest.



King: top rider

The Spillers Diamond award, a special award this year, went to the British Paralympic team, winners of the gold medal in the Paralympic Games dressage event in Atlanta.

AWARDS: Personality of the Year: Mary King; Horse of the Year: It's Otto; Diamond Award: Geoff Billington's It's Otto; Best Paralympic Team: British Paralympic Team; Best Paralympic Rider: Geoff Billington; Best Paralympic Horse: It's Otto; Best Paralympic Saddle: L. Eddowes; Best Paralympic Saddle: L. Eddowes; Best Paralympic Saddle: L. Eddowes.

SPORT IN BRIEF

IT WAS another turbulent day in the life of Sussex County Cricket Club yesterday. Richard Barrow, a member of the club committee, resigned in protest at the departure of five players and a "totally unacceptable" style of management at Hove. In addition, David Smith, the former England and Sussex opening batsman, has backed a scheme put forward by Tony Pigott, another former player, to oust the committee and replace it en bloc. Smith said: "Too many people are making excuses and in any other business they wouldn't have survived; they are obviously making mistakes."

Badminton: The All England open championships will start next week with the lowest-ever number of British seeds. There are no singles seeds from the home countries, and only three British players — all women — are seeded for the doubles. The favourite for the men's title, and No 1 seed, is Poul-Erik Hoyer, of Denmark, who is seeking his third successive All England title.

Sailing: Lars Bergstrom, a leading innovator in the design and invention of yachts, was killed on Sunday when his plane crashed. Bergstrom invented the Windex, a wind indicator that is mounted on a ship's mast. He was 62.

Rowing: Oriel will be looking to maintain the headship in the Oxford University Torpids, which start today, although Magdalen are likely to challenge them later in the week. Oriel-Green, the women's head crew, face their biggest challenge from the outset, as St Catherine's, a strong eight, start directly behind them.

Athletics: Sonia McGeorge pulled out of the Great Britain team yesterday for the world indoor championships this week. McGeorge, who was scheduled to run in the 3,000 metres, has been forced to withdraw through illness.

Tennis: Mark Philippoussis, of Australia, equalled the fastest serve recorded on the men's circuit this season during his victory over Tommy Haas in the first round of the tournament in Scottsdale, Arizona. Philippoussis recorded 139mph, matching the mark of Greg Rusedski, of Britain.

Golf: Gordon Sherry, the former British amateur champion, will make his debut on the Challenge Tour in Kenya next week. Sherry failed to gain his card for the European Tour this year through the qualifying school and will be looking for one of 15 places on the circuit for next season that are given to Challenge Tour players.

BOWLS

Endurance proving a vital ingredient

BY DAVID RHYS JONES

SUCCESS in bowls should be a reward for skill, not stamina, but the English Women's Indoor Bowling Association (EWIBA) national championships at York, where Sharon Rickman defeated Lynda Jarman 21-19 in the Champion of Champions singles final yesterday, have turned into a test of endurance for competitors who have qualified in more than one event.

Yesterday three of the singles semi-finalists were also engaged in the triples. Rickman and Jarman were required to play four games, which kept them each actively engaged on the green for around 11 hours between 10am and 11.30pm.

Ann Harrison, who was pipped by Jarman, 21-18, in the semi-finals, knew how they felt. On Monday she had toiled for 12 hours, rolling her first wood at 10am, and her last on the stroke of midnight. Yesterday she was left off lightly — just nine hours.

The programme, which was devised years ago and has never been revised, is designed to get through eight events in as many days. Each event takes two days to com-

plete, but the task of getting a quart into a pint pot is achieved by starting a new event before the previous one has finished.

It is only when individuals qualify for more than one event that problems arise, and, such is the skill of the leading contenders, multiple qualification is becoming more common. Players have been penalised for their own success by being asked to play four matches a day, while others have to wait around until their scheduled opponents are available.

The EWIBA officials, who are not unsympathetic, are determined to address the problem. "We are all players ourselves, and have been looking at what has been happening through the eyes of the competitors," Liz Read, a junior vice-president, said.

Margaret Ruff, the England secretary, said: "We have a heavy programme to get through, and have to make sure that we keep to the timings as far as possible. We will be looking very carefully at future scheduling."

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CORRECT SCORE

5/1 MAN. LTD. 1-0 5/1 DRAW 1-1
7/1 MAN. LTD. 2-0 18/1 DRAW 2-2
7/1 MAN. LTD. 2-1 12/1 PORTO 2-0
16/1 MAN. LTD. 3-1 40/1 PORTO 3-1

Other scores on request.

FIRST GOALSCORER

5/1 SOLSKJAER (M) 10/1 BECKHAM (M)
6/1 CANTONA (M) 16/1 KEANE (M)
6/1 JARDEL (P) 20/1 JORGE COSTA (P)
7/1 DOMINGOS (P) 40/1 MAY (M)

Own goals do not count. Other players on request.

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William HILL

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A tense evening, but that's how it is; or was

Clive James was having trouble with his narrative. The big question was, would he get it sorted out by the end of *Clive James Meets Damon Hill* (ITV)? Answer: not really. But you know that. Ignoring the indefinite present offered by video recorders, the programme became firmly past tense last night. It's over, finished, completed — just like last year's *Formula One* season. We know what happened. James's challenge, however, was to bring that past tense to something approaching life and he did so using that special tense known only to documentary-makers who fear their footage has been overtaken by events, a sort of conditional future past.

"Had Williams secretly fired him already?" he asked conspiratorially, his eyes audibly narrowing. Well yes, Clive, they had — we know that now. Just as we know about the Spa circuit in Belgium:

"If he didn't win the grip on the championship would grow white knuckles." You don't say. All this enjoyable bluster, however, disguised a bigger problem. While many journalists would have killed for just ten minutes with Hill, James (who has some how become the Mr Toad of the grand prix world) had been given two weeks. Private planes, private cars, even a day at Hill's private home in Ireland, Dunpayntin, like a smooth-talking spanglied, James followed him everywhere. The problem was, he'd got the wrong two weeks.

Nothing was resolved while he was there, as our man eventually admitted. "It was the end of my two weeks." And a couple of races later, Hill finally got his hands on the world championship. Despite James's attempts to pretend otherwise, the rest really was history. But there was probably just

about enough here for Damon devotees. Hill showed off his guitars and gym and talked about his father and driving a Formula One car. "When it's going well, the car is dancing... you feel in touch with the molecules between the rubber and the road." George Hill, his normally low-profile wife, was rather more plain, recalling the certainty of their first meeting. "I didn't like him and we had nothing in common, but I knew I was going to marry him." And reader, she did.

But having the most fun, of course, was James, never happier than when he's tucked into the slipstream of the ultra-rich and successful. Together they flew to Bulgaria, where "sponsors Rothmans were ready to welcome Damon's help in turning millions of uneducated communists into chain-smokers." Later he gleefully wriggled his considerable frame into the Williams car. "At least I

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

had a racing driver's backside... even if I had a truck driver's stomach." Works just as well in the present tense too, Clive. We were firmly back in the past historic for *House Detectives* (BBC2), which for a man badly missing *Time Team* suited me fine. For those who don't remember or never knew, *Time Team* is the Channel 4 series in which a team of archaeologists have three days

to dig a site. *House Detectives* is much the same — without the mud. Three historians have a leisurely five days to discover the origins of a house, helped or hindered (depending on your view of the BBC's portfolio of interchangeable blondes) by Juliet Morris.

Last night's opener, however, was almost insultingly easy, involving, as it did, a striking Edwardian villa in Fulwood, an affluent suburb of Preston. Edwardian? Didn't that make it less than a hundred years old? It did. Easy-peasy — a couple of trips down to the record office and it was all over.

The flamboyant and turreted house had been built by a John Hodgson, not only a "plumbing, painting and paper-hanging merchant" as a helpful trade directory described him, but also a councillor, an alderman and eventually Mayor of Preston. And exactly low-profile then.

Hodgson appeared to have used the house almost as a showroom, incorporating the very latest in stained glass and Anaglypta wallpaper. Once we had ascertained that and what the experts grandly thought of it ("trivolt, ornate, a little bit vulgar"), interest faded, only to revive right at the end. For having enjoyed more than 20 years of fake Jacobean splendour, Hodgson eventually retired to the real McCoy, the 17th-century Oxendale Hall. Now that really did look like a proper challenge for a team of aspiring house detectives. "Who needs Anaglypta now?" said one. Who indeed?

From the outset it seemed *Inside Story: A Deadly Secret* (BBC1) would be employing the past most imperfect to tell its sad tale. Jan Pink had gone to Cyprus to recover from the divorce that brought her 20-year marriage to an end. There she met and fell in love with a Greek fisherman... and contract-

ed HIV from him. He knew he was carrying the virus, but never told her.

For about 90 seconds I heartlessly wondered whether the BBC would have made such a film if she had come back with one of the lesser sexually transmitted diseases — or indeed whether her extended family would have been quite so open about discussing it. So then we saw her ravaged face and emaciated body and such thoughts disappeared.

Carrie Britton's film was not perfect, in particular being over-reliant on her cousin's well-intentioned but misguided quest for "justice," which turned out to be legally impossible in Britain and unenforceable in Cyprus. We never were told what happened to the fisherman, but by the end of a very touching film that was as much about family as it was about AIDS, Jan, miraculously, was back in the present tense.

BBC1

- 6.00am *Breakfast* (54850) 9.00 *BBC Breakfast News* (7) (56308) 9.00 *Breakfast News Extra* (1) (5414786)
- 9.20 *Style Challenge* (4761143)
- 9.45 *Kilroy* (4441308)
- 10.30 *Can't Cook, Won't Cook* (54788)
- 11.00 *News* (1) and weather (5467105)
- 11.05 *The Really Useful Show* (7079634)
- 11.35 *Change That* (5654788)
- 12.00 *News* (1), regional news and weather (7511834)
- 12.05pm *The Alphabet Game* (5552037)
- 12.30 *Going for a Song* (5622105)
- 12.55 *The Weather Show* (7599399)
- 1.00 *News* (1) and weather (54945)
- 1.30 *Regional news and weather* (5863414)
- 1.40 *Neighbours* (1) (11950921)
- 2.05 *Police Rescue* (1) (2418834)
- 2.55 *As Time Goes By* Comedy series with Judi Dench and Geoffrey Palmer (1) (5285143)
- 3.25 *Well Worth a Visit* A journey 300 feet underground to experience coal mining techniques in the Welsh Big Pit Mining Museum (5400740)
- 3.30 *Playdays* (1) (5412650) 3.50 *Crucifixion* (5432414) 4.10 *Popeye and Son* (1) (4119404) 4.35 *The Wild House* (1) (5468327) 5.00 *Newsround* (3728230) 5.10 *Blue Peter* (7462871)
- 5.35 *Neighbours* (1) (701124)
- 6.00 *News* (1) and weather (259)
- 6.30 *Newsround South East* (1) (211)
- 7.00 *News* (1) and weather (259)
- 7.30 *Tomorrow's World* The results of a pen-testing operation by American archaeologist Denis van Gerven to reveal why more women than men survived famine in the Dark Ages (1) (495)
- 8.00 *The National Lottery Live* (1) (290834)
- 8.15 *25 Years of the Two Ronnies* A celebratory compilation (1) (338855)
- 8.50 *Points of View* (1) (458921)
- 9.00 *News* (1), regional news and weather (5940)
- 9.29 *National Lottery Update* (529389)
- 9.30 *One Foot in the Grave* A sly widow sees her sights on the cantankerous pensioner Victor (1) (49056)
- 10.00 *Insiders* Emotions run high when a Catholic priest kills a young boy in a car accident while rushing from his mistress's bed, with Julia Ford (1) (504798)
- 10.50 *Sportsnight* Highlights of tonight's FA Premiership derby between Leicester City and Aston Villa and Middlesex v Derby County. Plus the pick of the action from boxing's ABCA National Championships in Birmingham (5218167)
- 12.25am *Murder So Sweet* (1993) with Henry Hamlin, Helen Shaver and K.T. Oslin. A woman is convinced her smooth-talking former husband is responsible for the death of his latest wife, and persuades a detective to help prove her hunch. Directed by Larry Fessenden (1) (2770254)
- 1.55 *Weather* (593809)

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BBC2

- 6.00am *Open University* (7440768) 6.25 *Top Down Design* (7452011) 6.50 *The Statistician Strikes Back* (5234203) 7.15 *News* (1) (7356261) 7.30 *Captain Caveman and the Teen Angels* (1) (71563)
- 7.55 *Record Breakers* Gold (1) (1) (5397037) 8.20 *Teddy Trucks* (1) (5397037) 8.25 *Spot* (1) (5397037) 8.30 *The Record* (517352) 9.00 *Jeunes Francophones* (4749921) 9.25 *See You, See Me* (5424143) 9.45 *Words and Pictures* (7205679) 10.00 *Playdays* (11360) 10.30 *Numberline* (7229124) 10.45 *Cats' Eyes* (7224679) 11.00 *Around Scotland* (540236) 11.20 *Music Makers* (5302308) 11.40 *Scotnet* in Action (5273582) 12.00 *Spanish Globo* (7519476) 12.05pm *History File* (5550679) 12.30 *Working Lunch* (27834) 1.00 *The Geography Programme* (47760495) 1.20 *Thunderbirds in French* (56074380) 1.25 *Zig Zag* (4777230) 1.45 *Comic Outside* (53640563) 2.00 *Teddy Trucks* (1) (5397037) 2.05 *Spot* (1) (5397037) 2.10 *Everyone's Got One* (5451785) 2.20 *News* (1) (7356261) 2.30 *Today's the Day* (124) 4.30 *Ready, Steady, Cook* (308) 5.00 *Esther* (2921)
- 5.30 *Seniors Pot* Black Graham Miles v Rex Williams (360)
- 6.00 *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1) (562968)
- 6.45 *Trev and Simon's Transmission Impossible* (141414)
- 7.00 *Hancock* (b/w) (1) (1) (785)
- 7.30 *Counterblast: Author Nigel Harris suggests that the government grant workers are one of society's vital foundations* (1) (227)
- 8.00 *University Challenge* (1) (1) (5105)
- 8.30 *Changing Rooms* (5740)



Designer Kavita Deswani (9.00pm)

- 9.00 *Modern Times: Hong Kong* British and Chinese residents of soon-to-be-relinquished Hong Kong reveal their anticipation of imminent change (1) (578056)
- 9.50 *A Woman Called Smith* Echoes of a rhythm guitarist Debbie Smith talks about the strain of keeping up a long-distance relationship with her girlfriend. Directed by Jonathan Meades (1) (24259)
- 10.00 *Even Further Afield* The Times columnist looks at modern church architecture (1) (24259)
- 10.30 *Newsnight* (122196)
- 11.15 *This Life* (1) (374834)
- 11.55 *Weather* (520853)
- 12.00 *The Midnight Hour* (25902)
- 12.30am *Learning Zone: Q & A: Chemistry of Creativity* 1.00 *Chemistry of the Invisible* 1.30 *Chemistry of Creativity* 2.00 *GNQ* 4.00 *English Heritage* 4.30 *Unleash in the Classroom* 5.00 *Health and Safety at Work* 5.30 *Voluntary Matters*

CHOICE

Counterblast: Don't Fence Me In

Tonight's unfashionable opinion belongs to Professor Nigel Harris of University College London. He contends that far from being the time bomb waiting to explode of political and media cliché, immigration is a good thing. It has huge economic benefits, it releases entrepreneurial abilities and it revitalises cultural life. Harris has surprisingly little to say on his last point, which may seem to be his strongest. He leaves it to fleeing images to remind us of the immigrant contribution to sport and letters. But he argues fiercely enough on the economic front. Without immigrants, he points out, there would be Marks & Spencer, and he says that the economy of many modern cities would collapse if immigrants were not willing to take essential, poorly paid, jobs.

Travel Channel 4, 8.30pm

Pete McCarthy rounds off the current series in Costa Rica which, he promises, is a different kind of Latin America. Different, that is, from its immediate neighbours, Nicaragua and Panama, where all sorts of nasty things happen to innocent people. For one thing, Costa Rica has long since abolished its armed forces which, as McCarthy shrewdly remarks, virtually eliminates the possibility of a military coup. Warning to the theme, McCarthy suggests that Costa Rica could give banana republics a good name. Whether this placid country will figure much on British holiday itineraries is another matter. As McCarthy presents it, Costa Rica has few roads, lots of bugs and an abnormal amount of rain. But it is a paradise for birdwatchers and the world capital of plastic surgery.

Modern Times: Hong Kong

Lucy Blakstad's film catches the mood in Hong Kong as the handover to China looms by focusing on five of the colony's residents. It is a simple formula, but effectively executed, as you would expect from Blakstad whose previous documentaries in this series have covered flamantes, weekenders and the habits of a London swimming pool. Her subjects this time are headed by Tom, an old colonial who lives in a retirement home, has no family left and does not trust the Chinese one iota. Also representing the older generation is Grammy Kwan, who fled to Hong Kong to escape a brutal life in China and lives on welfare which she fears will be stopped. We hear, too, from Jimmy, a successful businessman, Kavita, a young fashion designer, and Jo, who spent four years in a Chinese prison after the Tiananmen Square massacre.

Even Further Afield: The Absentee Landlord

Although he is a self-confessed atheist, as you will soon gather from this film, Jonathan Meades acknowledges the staying power of God and not least his biases. The topic for tonight, therefore, is church architecture but not as you have ever seen it treated before. After the brief excursion into the Gothic, both medieval and Victorian revival. Meades gathers most of his examples, targets, would be a better word — from the period since the Second World War. As usual he is irreverent, provocative and contentious, but his arguments with a few fireworks display of verbal and visual gags. As usual too, it is not always clear where he stands. After seeming to heap scorn on most post-1945 houses of God he appears to praise a chapel by Basil Spence that some of us might dismiss as a concrete lump. Peter Waymark

HTV

- 6.00am *GMTV* (5818592)
- 9.25 *Chain Letters* (4748634)
- 9.50 *Regional News* (1) (5358921)
- 10.00 *The Time, the Place* (48414)
- 10.30 *This Morning* (1) (42276430)
- 12.20pm *Regional News* (1) (7517018)
- 12.30 *News* (1) and weather (5650501)
- 12.55 *Regional News* (1) (5650501)
- 1.25 *Shortland Street* (47767308) 1.50 *Afternoon Live* (11965853) 2.20 *Vanessa* (58917360) 2.50 *Afternoon Live* (271940)
- 3.20 *News* (1) and weather (5650227)
- 3.25 *Regional News* (1) (7600768)
- 3.30 *Tots TV* (5410817) 3.40 *The Blobs* (5974650) 3.50 *The Little Mermaid* (5418634) 4.15 *Chuggly* (1) (1412679)
- 4.40 *Cartoon Zone* (1) (458814)
- 5.10 *Look and Cook* (1) (5605495)
- 5.40 *News* (1) and weather (560490)
- 6.00 *Home and Away* (1) (728327)
- 6.25 *HTV Weather* (567018)
- 6.30 *HTV News* (1) (565582)
- 6.50 *Emmerdale* Frank struggles to cope with his loss (1) (562111)
- 7.20 *European Champions League Quarter-Final, First Leg: Live: Manchester United v FC Porto* Bob Wilson presents coverage from Old Trafford with commentary by Brian Moore (1) (70484230)
- 9.30 *Coronation Street* Fraser (Glyn Grain) wants answers after the bungled robbery and subjects Liz (Beverly Callard) to an interrogation (34124)
- 10.00 *News at Ten* (1) and weather (11785)
- 10.30 *Regional News* (1) (456872)
- 10.40 *Taggart* A writer who has made a name for himself in Hollywood receives a death threat, leading Taggart into a murky world of jealousy and deceit (1) (514105)
- 11.40 *European Champions League Highlights* Tony Francis presents action from this evening's quarter-final, first-leg ties, including reaction to Manchester United's match against Porto. Other games include: Borussia Dortmund v Auxerre; Rosenborg v Juventus in Norway and Ajax v Atletico Madrid in the Amsterdam Arena (522105)
- 12.45am *The Enemy* (108780)
- 1.45 *My Brother's Wife* (1989) with John Rimer, Mal Harries and Polly Bergen. Comedy drama a practical joker who has spent the last 30 years pursuing the woman of his — sister-in-law. Directed by Jack Bertram (342070)
- 3.25 *Sound Bites* (7378983)
- 3.35 *Not Fade Away* (1) (5054902)
- 4.30 *The Time, the Place* (1) (51490)
- 5.00 *Coronation Street* (1) (1) (37322)
- 5.30 *FTN Morning News* (20457)

SATELLITE AND CABLE

- SKY 1**
6.00am *Morning Glory* (560119) 9.00 *Reggie and Kathie Lee* (25621)
10.00 *10.00 Days of Our Lives* (70739) 12.00 *Opish Wintry* (78211)
1.00pm *Game Show* (56529) 2.00 *Sally Jessy Raphael* (56529) 3.00 *Johnnie Walker* (56529)
4.00 *Cartoon Network* (56529) 5.00 *Star Trek: Next Generation* (56529) 6.00 *Real TV* (4550)
6.30 *Massey* — with Chelton (56529) 7.00 *The Simpsons* (56529) 7.30 *Lois Lanes* (56529)
8.00 *Cartoon Network* (56529) 9.00 *Star Trek: Next Generation* (56529) 10.00 *Lois Lanes* (56529) 11.00 *Star Trek: Next Generation* (56529) 12.00 *Lois Lanes* (56529)
- SKY 2**
7.00pm *Heracles: The Legendary Journeys* (5612105) 8.00 *Rampage* (5612105) 9.00 *Lois Lanes* (5612105) 10.00 *Star Trek: Next Generation* (5612105) 11.00 *Lois Lanes* (5612105) 12.00 *Star Trek: Next Generation* (5612105)
- SKY NEWS**
Worldwide news coverage, with bulletins on the hour, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- SKY MOVIES**
6.00am *Rampage* (5612105) 7.00 *The Way West* (5612105) 8.00 *Alone in the Desert* (5612105) 9.00 *Lois Lanes* (5612105) 10.00 *Star Trek: Next Generation* (5612105) 11.00 *Lois Lanes* (5612105) 12.00 *Star Trek: Next Generation* (5612105)
- SKY SPORTS 1**
7.00am *Sports Centre* (53872) 7.30 *Wrestling* (72563) 8.30 *Racing News* (56872) 9.00 *Sports Centre* (53872) 10.00 *Football* (56872) 11.00 *Wrestling* (72563) 12.00 *Sports Centre* (53872) 1.00 *Football* (56872) 2.00 *Sports Centre* (53872) 3.00 *Football* (56872) 4.00 *Sports Centre* (53872) 5.00 *Football* (56872) 6.00 *Sports Centre* (53872) 7.00 *Football* (56872) 8.00 *Sports Centre* (53872) 9.00 *Football* (56872) 10.00 *Sports Centre* (53872) 11.00 *Football* (56872) 12.00 *Sports Centre* (53872)
- SKY SPORTS 2**
7.00am *Sports Centre* (53872) 7.30 *Wrestling* (72563) 8.30 *Racing News* (56872) 9.00 *Sports Centre* (53872) 10.00 *Football* (56872) 11.00 *Wrestling* (72563) 12.00 *Sports Centre* (53872) 1.00 *Football* (56872) 2.00 *Sports Centre* (53872) 3.00 *Football* (56872) 4.00 *Sports Centre* (53872) 5.00 *Football* (56872) 6.00 *Sports Centre* (53872) 7.00 *Football* (56872) 8.00 *Sports Centre* (53872) 9.00 *Football* (56872) 10.00 *Sports Centre* (53872) 11.00 *Football* (56872) 12.00 *Sports Centre* (53872)
- SKY SPORTS 3**
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- EUROSPORT**
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CENTRAL

- As HTV West except:
12.55pm-1.25 *A Country Practice* (5825292)
5.10-5.40 *Shortland Street* (5659495)
6.25-6.50 *Central News* (582853)
1.45pm *Funky Bunker* (104964)
2.45 *The Chart Show* (4413148)
3.40 *Central Jobfinder '97* (5655438)
5.20 *Asian Eye* (5427167)
- WESTCOUNTRY**
As HTV West except:
12.20pm-12.30 *Small Talk, Big Talk* (7517018)
12.55-1.25 *Emmerdale* (5825292)
5.10-5.40 *Home and Away* (5659495)
6.00-6.50 *Westcountry Live* (540747)
- MERIDIAN**
As HTV West except:
12.55-1.25 *A Country Practice* Medical drama set in the Australian outback (5825292)
6.00 *Meridian Tonight* (509766)
6.20-6.50 *Home Truths* (704747)
5.00am *Freescreen* (37322)
- ANGLIA**
As HTV West except:
12.19pm *Anglia Air Watch* (7529853)
12.55-1.25 *A Country Practice* (5825292)
5.10-5.40 *Shortland Street* New Zealand soap set in a suburban health centre (5659495)
6.22 *Anglia Weather* (568747)
6.25-6.50 *Anglia News* (562853)
10.29 *Anglia Air Watch* (546018)
- SAC**
Starts: 6.00am *Sesame Street* (47360)
7.00 *The Big Breakfast* (58018)
9.00 *Bewitched* (58834)
9.30 *Yagellon* (470124)
12.00 *House to House* (18698)
12.30pm *Here's One I Made Earlier* (45230)
1.00 *Slot Meltrith* (52105)
1.30 *Film: Blossoms in the Dust* (1941) starring Greer Garson and Walter Pidgeon. A weepie drama about a woman who starts an orphanage in Texas after losing her own family. Directed by Mervyn La Roy (5688478)
3.20 *Fresh Pop* (5193719)
3.30 *Collectors' Lot* (785)
4.00 *Fifteen-to-One* (292)
4.30 *Wings* (478)
5.00 *S Pump* (4389)
5.30 *Countdown* (376)
6.00 *Newyddion* (335768)
6.05 *Howe* (706105)
6.35 *Jacpot* (504308)
7.00 *Pobol y Cwm* (582414)
7.25 *Pierino* (107501)
8.00 *Hayfillo* (56501)
8.30 *Newyddion* (2308)
9.00 *Spin City* (1650)
9.30 *Roseanne* (32766)
10.00 *Brookside* (353383)
10.35 *ER* (525211)
11.30 *Caroline in the City* (35940)
12.00am *Under the Moon* (735781)
2.30 *NBA XXL* (79631)
4.00 *Yagellon* (4900631)

CHANNEL 4

- 6.00am *Sesame Street* (47360) 7.00 *The Big Breakfast* (58018) 9.00 *Bewitched* (58834) 9.30 *Yagellon* (470124) 12.00 *House to House* (18698) 12.30pm *Here's One I Made Earlier* (45230) 1.00 *Slot Meltrith* (52105) 1.30 *Film: Blossoms in the Dust* (1941) starring Greer Garson and Walter Pidgeon. A weepie drama about a woman who starts an orphanage in Texas after losing her own family. Directed by Mervyn La Roy (5688478) 3.20 *Fresh Pop* (5193719) 3.30 *Collectors' Lot* (785) 4.00 *Fifteen-to-One* (292) 4.30 *Wings* (478) 5.00 *S Pump* (4389) 5.30 *Countdown* (376) 6.00 *Newyddion* (335768) 6.05 *Howe* (706105) 6.35 *Jacpot* (504308) 7.00 *Pobol y Cwm* (582414) 7.25 *Pierino* (107501) 8.00 *Hayfillo* (56501) 8.30 *Newyddion* (2308) 9.00 *Spin City* (1650) 9.30 *Roseanne* (32766) 10.00 *Brookside* (353383) 10.35 *ER* (525211) 11.30 *Caroline in the City* (35940) 12.00am *Under the Moon* (735781) 2.30 *NBA XXL* (79631) 4.00 *Yagellon* (4900631)
- 8.30 *Traveling* In the last of the *Traveling* series Pete McCarthy visits Costa Rica in Central America, which apart from its rainforests, volcanoes, hot springs and spectacular coastlines is becoming the place to go for affordable plastic surgery (1) (2306)
- 9.00 *Fortean TV* Lionel Fanthorpe, the barking priest, investigates more tales of the paranormal. These include a ghostly encounter in a pub and a woman who talks to spirits (56) (1) (1650)
- 9.30 *Buzz Eye* Live in the comedy series with the satirist Chris Morris (32766)
- 10.00 *ER* American medical drama series. Mark Greene discovers the truth about HIV-positive Jeanie (1) (5679)
- 11



RACING 43

Cheltenham braced for return of Carberry mayhem

SPORT

WEDNESDAY MARCH 5 1997

CRICKET 46

Warne and Bevan spin Australia to emphatic win



Football counts cost of wrong result

After seven weeks of evidence, 47 witnesses, 11 hours bar one minute of deliberation, the eight men and three women of the Winchester jury — the numbers that add up to one side in a football match — admitted that they were beaten. They could not decide whether the accused were guilty or innocent of conspiring to fix matches.

The reputation of English football has been left hanging in limbo by the failure of the jury to come to a verdict in the trial of Regina v Grobbelaar, Segers, Fashanu and Lim.

We would have known whether or not the values of an FA Carling Premiership match are incorruptible, we cannot now be certain.

It is the worst of all possible outcomes for the national game that, after the summer of 1996, had risen to a higher profile in English society than at any time in history.

Even the World Cup victory of 1966 did not engage the minds of Parliament, prompt the huge backing that has come from business, or induce the prolonged national euphoria that came with the European championship.

Winchester is a marvellously historic city. To reach the Crown Courts, one walks through ancient court-

yards, and then into a complex of courtyards as modern as any in the land: it is like a fresh hand inside a medieval mailed glove.

And there, since the trial began on January 14, the integrity of English football was questioned on a daily basis. Outside, at least five television crews found a perch overlooking the entrance to the court. Inside, in the corridors outside Court Room No 3, one witnessed people involved in other criminal trials actually walking up to Grobbelaar and Fashanu and asking politely for autographs.



Rob Hughes on why there were no winners after the collapse of the Winchester trial

country's more famous goalkeepers, a silent gladiator who once scored goals fearlessly for Wimbledon, and a businessman from Malaysia, awaited their fate.

It is estimated to have cost £1½ million of public money, given the two years of police work, the engagement of barristers and Mr Justice Tuckey.

Last Thursday, when the judge began his complex and laborious summing up, I sat in the courtroom studying these four men. Each of them had

origins outside this country: Lim is a Malaysian, Segers is Dutch, Grobbelaar fought in the Rhodesian army, and Fashanu, though a Barnard's boy, was born of a Nigerian father.

Their ordeal was evident as they sat before the court, though at lunchtime they became family men again, and two of them still played the Beautiful Game while out on bail.

What anyone who has any interest or love of football

depends upon is that the game is decided in a fashion that cannot be corrupted. A game without a result is anathema: and yet in football the ruling bodies have concocted a process of deciding stalemates on penalties.

The penalty that is awaiting us now is that we cannot be sure of what we think we believe.

The fact that the Crown Prosecution Service indicated yesterday evening that they may seek a retrial means that, not only is the sport put into continued suspense, but that those who have listened to the prosecution and to the defence are not at liberty to discuss publicly the deeply disturbing exchanges.

Remember, the four men have denied everything and the premise of English justice is that a person is innocent until proven guilty.

How I wish that football itself could today be above suspicion. It is a wonderful game, it has given countless Englishmen, and increasingly, women, lifelong satisfaction. It has rewarded, players with the salaries of film stars, elevated them to a phenomenally high status in society. That attraction must be protected.

At the beginning of his summing-up, Mr Justice Tuckey had chosen a perhaps inappropriate Shanklyism. The judge told the jurors that "a famous football club man-

ager" had once said that football was not a matter of life and death, but that it was more serious than that.

The judge was right to warn his jury that this was and is a serious case for the defendants, serious for football, and serious for all who follow it. But, Mr Tud, Bill Shankly actually never said all the words as alleged.

It was put to him that football was a matter of life and death. "Nae, son," he responded, "it is more important than that."

Nothing is quite what it seems, nor is likely to seem so innocent in our sporting world again.

Trial abandoned, page 1

Keane's injury leaves United hoping for best

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

ALEX FERGUSON has almost run out of superlatives when discussing Roy Keane. Cantona may be "inspirational", Giggs may be "brilliant", but Keane is the first name on any Manchester United team-sheet, Keane is Ferguson's "most important player". The thought of losing him to injury is enough to have given the United manager an anxious night before his team reacquainted themselves with the European Cup this evening.

It remains the competition that United hanker after the most. Winning league championships has become almost a habit at Old Trafford, even the double is no longer unique, yet Europe's premier club prize has been won just once, in 1968, and this season Ferguson made no secret of the fact that he wanted to win that trophy more than any other.

Indeed, until yesterday, everything appeared to be going to plan. United had run into form, confidence was

bubbling and the thought of meeting FC Porto, perhaps the best team of the Champions' League group stages, in the last eight was not as intimidating as it had been when United toiled through the autumn. Then Keane, the foundation upon which the rest of the United side is built, struggled through a fitness test.

If the Irishman did not fail it exactly, he did not pass it either and the ankle injury that is giving cause for concern remains a threat to his place against Porto. "I hoped he would have done better this morning," Ferguson said after putting Keane through his paces. "He didn't do badly, but it did not go as well as we wanted. We will leave things open and give him every chance tomorrow, but I would say he is doubtful now."

Ronny Johnsen, the versatile Norwegian, is standing by to take his place in a team that Ferguson believes is on a high. "The good thing from our point of view is that our

players seem to get better at this time of the year. We didn't have the best of times when we played in the qualification for this stage, but we have gone on since then. We are four points clear in the league and we have gone 16 Premiership games without losing and that is phenomenal."

For their part, Porto have begun to show signs of frailty. After running away with the Portuguese league and brushing aside AC Milan in the Champions' League, their form has dipped a little, including a 2-2 draw with Estrela Amadora at the weekend in a match they would have won comfortably a month ago. Allegations of match-fixing involving their chairman, Jorge Nuno Pinto da Costa, have hardly helped morale either, but they reported no injury worries yesterday and Antonio Oliveira, their coach, professed to having extra motivation to beat the English champions.

"I have read in Portugal that Mr Ferguson thinks Oporto is a little village and that the Portuguese league is not very competitive," Oliveira said, "but as a player and a national coach I have experienced a lot of games and I don't see much difference in standard between the two countries."

"These little things are all ways that people have of trying to upset the opposition. It's all a game of chess, psychology. I will wait tomorrow to show my big move, but



Keane doubtful

I will be fascinated to see how long my little Porto resist the power of mighty Manchester United." The smile that accompanied those sentiments suggested Oliveira expects his team to resist for a very long time indeed.

His assistant, Joaquim Teixeira, was even more forthright. "We have done our homework very carefully. We have a great team and if it clicks, we will surely win."

Both men will place their faith in a line-up that may boast a Slovenian, Zlatko Zahovic, a Yugoslav, Drulovic, and as many as five Brazilians, including Edmundo in midfield and Jarrod in front, a striker described by Bobby Robson, the former Porto coach now in charge at Barcelona, as the "best header of a ball in the world".

"If Jarrod is the biggest threat, then I'm not too worried," Ferguson said earlier in the week. "We've got Gary Pallister to deal with him and if Pally can't deal with him, then nobody can." Such confidence from the United manager can only be reinforced if Keane is declared fit to play.



Lee German, right, the New Zealand cricket captain, and Michael Atherton share the spoils in Wellington after the drawn one-day series. Report, page 46

Villa switch to Ferguson in search for striker

BY DAVID MADDOCK

WITH an eye on the looming transfer deadline, Aston Villa yesterday intensified their search for the forward they believe will strengthen their challenge for a place in Europe by moving for Duncan Ferguson, the Scotland international.

Doug Ellis, the Villa chairman, has made tentative contact with Everton, Ferguson's club, to propose a £7 million transfer. A formal bid seems sure to follow before the end of the month.

Ferguson's form in recent weeks has been closely monitored and Brian Little, the Villa manager, was at Goodison Park on Saturday to watch him in action against Arsenal. He was encouraged by Ferguson's fitness after a number of injuries that have restricted his appearances. Since arriving at Everton in 1994 for a fee of £4.4 million, Ferguson has managed just 57 appearances in three seasons and scored only 19 goals. More important, he has frequently failed to tune in to the same wavelength as Joe Royle, his manager.

It is a situation that has offered encouragement to Villa, and the response yesterday from within Goodison Park was not unyielding. Ellis was told that Ferguson will not be allowed to leave immediately, not until the Merseyside club is safe from relegation, but could be sold should survival be assured quickly.

Royle has already allowed one expensive misfit, Andre Kanchelskis, to leave for a substantial fee and, given Ferguson's lack of goals, he may follow the same route again to allow funds to be

released to strengthen the side.

A senior official at the club said last night: "Duncan has had mixed success since arriving at Goodison, and even though he is popular with the supporters, if the fee is right then it might be hard to resist."

Senior figures in the boardroom feel it is time for new faces to be brought in to ensure more goals and a more exciting style of play. Gary Speed, a midfield player, is top scorer this season with only seven goals.

Villa have been anxious for much of the season to bring in a centre forward to complement Dwight Yorke. Little, whose side has failed to do as well as expected in three cup competitions and has slipped too far behind Manchester United to harbour any hopes of winning the FA Carling Premiership, wants to ensure that Villa do at least finish high enough to qualify for a place in the Uefa Cup next season.



Ferguson: target man

He made a bid of £4.5 million for Stan Collymore, the Liverpool forward, last November but that failed because the fee offered was too low. Little has now changed targets, after a series of below par performances by Collymore.

He was able to watch the match against Liverpool at Villa Park last Sunday, but his interest would appear dead. Collymore has struggled to provide the sort of support for Robbie Fowler at Anfield that would make him the type of partner Yorke requires.

He has failed to settle on Merseyside and his lacklustre display at Villa Park could have ensured that he will become surplus to requirements at Anfield.

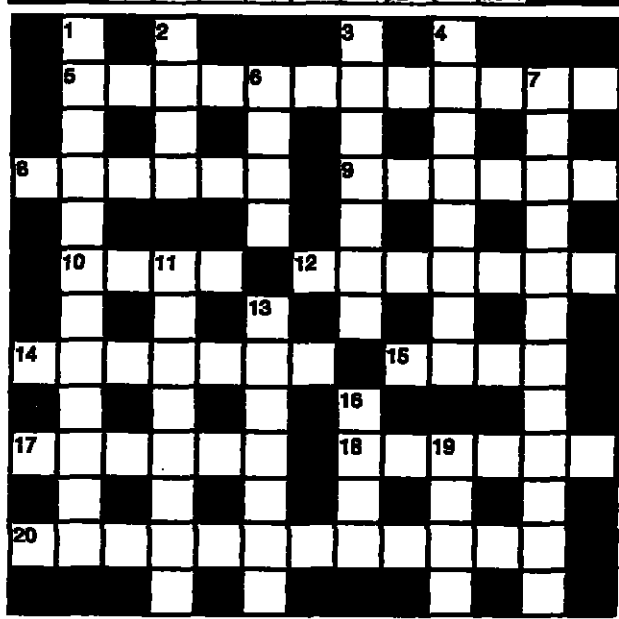
The 1-0 defeat caused severe damage to Liverpool's title chances and afterwards Collymore was involved in a public disagreement with Roy Evans, when he criticised the Liverpool manager for substituting him.

Collymore believes that he has not been given a reasonable opportunity and aired his grievances yesterday. Evans, for his part, expressed his exasperation with the player's inconsistency.

The Liverpool manager hinted strongly yesterday that Collymore would be dropped for the first leg of the European Cup Winners' Cup quarter-final with Brann Bergen on Thursday night.

"Sometimes it is difficult to understand his motives, but that happens with a lot of players," Evans said.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1033

ACROSS

- 5 Place limits round (12)
- 8 African country; old coin (6)
- 9 S American blowpipe poison (6)
- 10 Player on North's left (4)
- 12 Schematic drawing (7)
- 14 A mollusc; a sinister power (7)
- 15 Assert as untrue (4)
- 17 Fisherman (6)
- 18 Association: old distance (6)
- 20 Tricky quibbling (12)

DOWN

- 1 Passive agreement (12)
- 2 Grain husks (4)
- 3 With eg telepathic powers (7)
- 4 Adjourn (parliament) (8)
- 6 Salt Lake state (4)
- 7 Gordon Riots novel (Dickens) (7,5)
- 11 Tobias —, 18C novelist (8)
- 13 Go roman (7)
- 16 Jam up; footwear (4)
- 19 Similar, related (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1032

ACROSS: 7 Clue 8 Heraldic 9 Walker 10 Poles 11 Moon 12 Superman 13 Kapsake 17 Vice 18 Slaves 21 Sanly 22 El Dorado 23 Teat

DOWN: 1 Al Capone 2 Beckon 3 Charisma 4 Drop 5 Elbow 6 File 13 Press box 14 Alcatraz 16 Pavlov 17 Vanity 19 Lulu 20 Shaw

SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD 1028

In association with BRITISH MIDLAND

ACROSS: 1 Dawn 3 Benjamin 8 Bilk 9 Penchant 11 Newfangled 14 Insane 15 Scrape 17 Sine qua non 20 Idealist 21 Miss 22 Pub crawl 23 Lean

DOWN: 1 Debonair 2 Wild West 4 Energy 5 Jockey Club 6 Mean 7 Note 10 Punkin 12 Jaundice 13 Tennyson 16 See-saw 18 Wisp 19 Herb

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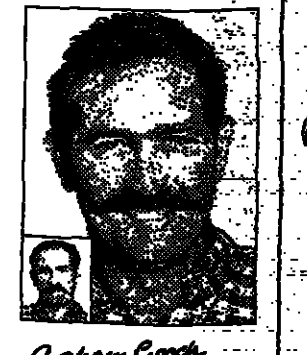
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